# GIPSIES

## FORGOTTEN CHILDREN OF INDIA

CHAMAN LAL

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

As a result of the extensive studies in comparative philology and anthropology in the last few decades, it has been widely accepted that the gipsies are people who left India some centuries ago. The author records in this book the evidence he personally found of the racial memories preserved in the folk-ways and speech patterns of these wanderers in Europe and the New World. He has also collected contributions from well-known authorities to bear out his observations.

In the lore of the gipsies, India is commonly referred to as the 'Baro Than', the 'Great Land'. Their songs and tales have close affinity with Indian words. Their vocabulary contains thousands of words which are identical with or similar to those in the languages and dialects of India. (Hundreds of these words are reproduced in this book.) Their rules of self-government are akin to the Panchayat system of our country. All these are enough, says the author, to establish the proposition that the gipsies scattered over the world are indeed 'forgotten children of India.

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CHAMAN LAL

*FOREWORD BY*

**DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR**

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*To*
*My Beloved Leader*

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*Who Inspired And Generously*
*Helped This Research*

# *FOREWORD*

BHIKSHU CHAMAN LAL was, in his younger days in the thick of the political and, in fact, of the revolutionary movement of pre-independent India, and he was a well-known figure among the radical circles connected with the Indian Freedom Movement. He has now formally adopted the Buddhist faith and has been ordained a monk or Bhikshu. During recent years, he has, as a self-imposed labour of love, travelled quite often all round the world and has concentrated on discovering the almost incredible, yet authentic, contacts between the Indian civilisation and culture and the Mexican, Peruvian, Japanese and South-East Asian developments in the arts, sciences and religions. One of his theses is that the Aztec and Inca civilisations of South America originated in Hindu emigrants who founded great cities, built temples and cultivated the arts of mathematics, astronomy and agriculture. In two publications he has pointed out the linguistic affinities as well as the racial similarities between ancient Indians and Peruvians (Incas). He has also concentrated on making a thorough survey of Chinese and Japanese gods and temples of Indian origin and demonstrated the prevalence and worship of Indian deities and the cult of the heroes of the Indian Epics in China, Siam, Cambodia, Java, Bali and other places.

His present book is designed to prove that the so-called gipsies who are found in large numbers in various parts of Central and Southern Europe and America are of Indian origin and either emigrated or were driven by foreign conquerors from India to those countries. He has collected, in this volume, contributions from several well-known European and American authors to fortify his conclusions. It is a well-accepted proposition that the gipsies, who are a wandering

race and call themselves Romanies, are of Indian origin. They live by basket-making, dealing in horses and ponies, cattle-breeding, fortune-telling and various forms of magic. So much is really conceded even by authoritative sources like the authors of the Oxford Dictionary. A well-known American dictionary calls them a nomadic Caucasian minority race of Hindu origin

Bhikshu Chaman Lal, in addition to collecting the contributions of European experts, has himself conducted a great deal of research into the origin, the emigration and the habits and beliefs of the gipsies. They exist in India in large numbers and are sometimes called Lambadis and sometimes Banjaras. They are also widely spread in Spain, in Czechoslovak regions, Hungary, Yugoslavia and many other parts of Central Europe and in Central Asia as well.

I was first attracted to a study of the gipsy race when, as a student. I read those colourful books by George Borrow entitled *Lavengro, Romany Rye* and *The Bible in Spain.* No one who is interested in the literature of travel and of picturesque adventure can forget these partly autobiographical stories. George Borrow himself was called Lavengro which, in gipsy language, means philologist. *Romany Rye,* in gipsy language, means a gipsy gentleman and was a name applied to George Borrow by a Norfolk gipsy called Ambrose Smith. I have always thought that the two words *Romany* and *Rye* are corruptions of the Sanskrit *Romana* and *Raya* or *Raja, Romana* being the synonym for a charming or attractive person and *Raya* which is a variant of *Raja* being a synonym for a king or prince. Even now, *Rai, Roy, Rao* and *Rau* are used as suffixes to modern Hindu names and now denote certain defined communities.

Bhikshu Chaman Lal has moved among the members of this remarkable and mysterious race and has, from his own experience and from what he has learnt from many sources,

ascertained that the gipsies regard India as their Motherland, the tradition being that they emigrated from India when "barbarians invaded our Motherland". He has given many instances of the similarity and sometimes the identity of Hindu and gipsy words. They have a system like the Indian Panchayats and their marriage customs are similar to those of the various groups of Hindus. A Hungarian Gipsy Society has collected 1,500 folk songs which have a close affinity with Indian themes. In the language of Charles Leland, the gipsies today are as passionate, as fierce and as free as they ever have been and, according to gipsy tradition, the last of the gipsies will return to India picking their way among the scattered ruins of the Western world. Whether, as some stories tell, they were expelled or emigrated from India during the time of Alexander's invasion or during the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni, there is no doubt that they are proud of their Indian origin and deserve close and sympathetic study and treatment by Indian scholars and the Indian Government.

Bhikshu Chaman Lal has rendered a great service not only to this ancient and persistent race but to India by his loving study of a people who are scattered remnants of our stock, have spread all over the world and have, throughout, maintained their personalities and individual self-expression.

C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

# *PREFACE*

MOST OF YOU may have heard of the wandering gipsies of Europe and America but I wonder how many of you know that they are our own kith and kin. They are descended from the Aryan stock of Punjab, Sindh, Saurashtra, Rajputana and Malwa. During the last two years, I visited them in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, France, England, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Russia and the United States of America. I have personally met over 30,000 gipsies and attended their biggest gathering in South France in May 1960, through the kindness of our beloved Prime Minister, and the Indian Embassy in Paris. In this book I can only give a few facts about these our forgotten brothers and sisters. Firstly, the word 'gipsy' is a misnomer. They are not Egyptian. One and all they have Indian blood. They continue to use Indian words. In greeting me they said: "Tu Main Ek Rakt", *i.e.*, 'You and I have the same blood'.

Many legends are current about their migration. Hundreds of volumes have been written by experts to explain the origin of the gipsies. Almost all genuine scholars agree that they are of Aryan blood and their language Romany is derived from Sanskrit. It has thousands of words from Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati and the dialects of Rajputana and Malwa.

I have collected over 3,000 Romany words to prove their claim to India. Europe's six top-most gipsologists have supported my thesis. There are several theories on how and when their ancestors migrated from India and under what circumstances. Some scholars believe that the earliest migrations could have been at the time of Alexander's invasion of India. Others believe that this migration was

forced upon their ancestors by the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni (in the eleventh century) and other invaders who took hundreds of thousands of slaves from north and north-western India. This is a subject which requires closer scrutiny by historians but one thing is positively proved by their tribal names and that is that their original home was north and north-west India.

I have met descendants of Jats (soldiers of Prithvi Raj) now known as Zatt. I have met Sindhis calling themselves Sinte and Saurashtris known as Zaurachis in the United States singing what are pure Gujarati songs. These songs have been published in a book, *Deep Song*, and some are reproduced in this book.

In Spain, the gipsies have been almost forbidden to use their historic language but their eyes, their hospitality and their very souls speak of India. In almost all other countries, their language proves their origins. About 20 to 25 per cent of the words in their vocabulary have the imprint of their countries of adoption and now their countries of birth. In England, the gipsies have their own brand of English. Stealing is described as *choring* (the root is Hindi word *chori*). The queen is known as Bari Rani; all chiefs among their tribes are Rajas and women chiefs are called as Ranis. Their numerals are our numerals except for one or two bearing Greek influence.

Names of days supply the best proof of Sanskrit origins. Monday is known as *Pratham Divas*, Tuesday *Dvitiya Divas* and Wednesday *Tritiya Divas*. Let the historians find out when these names were current in India.

What greater proof of their Indian origins is needed ? They hate being called gipsies. They say they are Romany. They have faint memories of their exile from India as a result of foreign invasions.

No race, not even the Jews, have suffered so much

persecution all over Europe, especially in Germany, France, England and Spain. They were hunted with dogs, hanged by the thousands, gassed by Hitler—28,000 in one place, Bosnia, in the last war despite their proven Aryan origin. The British and the French Parliaments had passed cruel laws to wipe out the gipsies, and the German rulers were perhaps the most ruthless, and yet today there are six million gipsies in Europe and America. Russia is the only country where they were never persecuted. Some author asked them whether they would return to India and they replied: "We will return to India over the ashes of Europe". In saying this they gave expression to the tribal belief that there would be complete destruction of Europe in war.

Gipsies have thousands of European and American admirers because they are the best musicians in the world and their women have superb charm and beauty. Men and women, they were favourites with the nobility in Europe and especially in Russia. Many writers, poets and musicians in Russia are proud of their gipsy origins. Last year, I met some of the finest beauties among the gipsies in Moscow and especially the gipsy artistes employed in the gipsy theatre. The photographs will speak for themselves.

While about three millions of them still live in caravans, the other half in Europe are now living settled lives in modern flats. They have radios, pianos and even cars. There are gipsy writers, editors, poets, doctors and lawyers too. In Bulgaria alone they have 250 municipal councillors and twelve Members of the Parliament. The governments are doing a great deal to improve their economic position.

The most beautiful thing about the gipsies is their code of manners. A gipsy never tells a lie to a gipsy and never fails to repay his debt to a brother gipsy.

Indian films have made the gipsies home-sick. One Muslim gipsy travelled 500 miles to meet me in Sofia and

the first sentence he uttered was "Main Bombay Ja Hindi Seekh", *i.e.*, he wanted to go to Bombay to learn Hindi. Nehru, Raj Kapoor and Nargis are three popular names among gipsies in East Europe. They have read many books on India. In America and England too they have read Nehru's *Discovery of India* and they asked me: "How is it he says nothing about us—your forgotten brethren ?"

Our embassies and visitors from India can give them the touch of Indian love that they all desire.

*New Delhi* CHAMAN LAL

## *ACKNOWLEDGEMENT*

MAY I OFFER my cordial thanks to the authors and publishers mentioned in the text for the reproduction of valuable material concerning a thousand years of gipsy history ?

My indebtedness to the scholars and contributors is immense. But for the results of the investigations made by them in their respective spheres, it would have been impossible for me to present the rich and vast material on the subject in the compass of a short book.

I am specially grateful to Dr. Rade Uhlik, veteran gipsologist of Yugoslavia, who introduced me to many scholar friends and who gave me numerous books and the results of research into the life, marriage, morals and customs of gipsies based on a hundred articles in the *Journal of Gipsy Lore Society*.

I am grateful to our beloved Prime Minister* for his personal inspiration and assistance in bringing out this book.

I am also thankful to our Ambassadors and their officers in various countries (especially in our Embassies and Legations in France, Sweden. Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia), and the Embassies of almost all Eastern European countries in New Delhi for their kind co-operation.

The Governments of Bulgaria, France and Hungary were particularly helpful.

The love and regard that the hundreds and thousands of gipsies I met in all countries and the way they continue to regard India as the land of their origin and as Baro Than (Great Land) have left a deep impression on me. I recall the happy faces of many of them.

CHAMAN LAL

*Jawaharlal Nehru

# CONTENTS


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | FOREWORD | vii |
| | PREFACE | xi |
| | ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | xv |
| I. | INDIA OUR MOTHER | 1 |
| II. | A PROUD RACE | 13 |
| III. | WANDERERS FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS | 23 |
| IV. | THEIR NAMES AND ORIGIN | 35 |
| V. | MOST PERSECUTED RACE | 53 |
| VI. | MASTERS OF IMMORTAL MUSIC | 64 |
| VII. | GIPSIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE | 77 |
| VIII. | THE GIPSIES IN HUNGARY | 84 |
| IX. | FREE AS BIRDS | 100 |
| X. | INDIAN TRIBES IN EUROPE | 104 |
| XI. | GIPSIES IN BULGARIA | 110 |
| XII. | GIPSIES IN RUSSIA | 113 |
| XIII. | GIPSIES IN BRITAIN | 120 |
| XIV. | BEARERS OF CULTURE | 133 |
| XV. | THE INTRICACIES OF GIPSY SPEECH | 137 |
| XVI. | GIPSIES IN SWEDEN | 144 |
| XVII. | GIPSIES IN THE NEW WORLD | 153 |
| XVIII. | THEIR FAITH AND SPIRIT | 161 |
| XIX. | MARRIAGE AND MORALS | 167 |
| XX. | PUNJABI AND ROMANY PARALLELS | 182 |
| XXI. | GIPSY SONGS AND RIDDLES | 189 |
| XXII. | IMMORTAL INDIAN IMPRINTS | 199 |
| | APPENDIX | 207 |

# CHAPTER I

## "INDIA OUR MOTHER"

**Punjab, Original Home—"India is Our Mother"—Bulgarian M.P.'s View—Hungarian Gipsies' Reception—"Send Raj Kapoor and Nargis"—The Immortal Race—A Prophecy—How They Left India—Slaves Taken by Mahmud—Musicians from India—Letter to Nehru—An Interesting Gipsy Legend—Hindu Customs Prevail—Krishna and Arjuna Honoured—How Races Are Born—Numerals Are Indian—Nearest Language Punjabi—Bhra and Behn—Evidence in India—Banjaras and Gipsies.**

"PUNJAB, Punjab, Punjab" was the greeting with which the first educated gipsy I met, an advocate of Belgrade, welcomed me in his modern apartment. I was accompanied by a Secretary from our Embassy in Yugoslavia, who was a Punjabi. I asked the Yugoslav friend. M. Svetozar Simic, the reason for his reference to the Punjab in greeting us. He replied: "Don't you know my ancestors came from the Punjab ? I can prove it." Tears formed in my eyes when his seventy-year-old mother embraced me. I felt as though my mother had been reborn. M. Simic's wife, their two sons and their maid—who could pass off anyday for a Punjabi—all greeted me as though they were greeting a relation. The elder son is eager to come to India to study Hindi. M. Simic himself has done vast research in the history of gipsies.

I had a similar welcome from Romanies (gipsies) elsewhere, whether in Europe, America or Australia. They greeted me as if I were a blood relation. Even the words they used when doing so—"Tu main ek rakta" (You and I have the same blood)—were so completely Hindi. Wherever it was that they lived, they spoke the same language which had an unmistakable stamp of north-west India. Not

many people might know that the various sub-groups among the gipsies have Indian names, such as Zatts (Jats), Sintis (Sindhis) and Zaurachi (Saurashtri). Most of them have Indian features, as the photographs in this book show.

There are several theories about how and when the gipsies migrated to Europe from their original home. I shall deal with these theories later. Here I shall only note that the most widely accepted theory among the scholars and one that is popular among the gipsies themselves is that they went to Europe when their country (India) was invaded by foreigners and they were taken as slaves in hundreds of thousands.

There are six million gipsies in the world today. I have met them in large numbers in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, England, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Spain, France and the United States of America.

Everywhere in Europe I was deeply touched by the warm welcome extended to me by gipsy friends. At receptions the halls and even the streets were jammed with gipsy men, women and children. And they came, dark and light, great and small, and got round me and shook hands or held me by the arm, and asked me where I came from and whether I knew Romany. The conversation invariably started with the question "Romany Jane? (Do you know Romany?)" I would say, "Yes, I know a bit." Then we would compare the words in Romany and in Hindi for easily identifiable objects like the head, hair, eyes, mouth, arms, ears, etc. When they found that the Hindi words and the Romany terms for them were exactly the same and so were the words for brother, sister and brother-in-law, they were overwhelmed with emotion and would shout, "Dear brother, we have the same blood."

The gleam in their eyes, their beaming smiles, their pear-like teeth, all spoke of India and I felt as though it

was a reunion of long separated blood brothers. They brought me flowers, sweets, pictures, articles of dress and what-not. One evening an educated gipsy woman, after giving me the Indian salutation, presented me with an expensive box of sweets saying, "And I am your Indian sister too."

How touching the farewell was in every town and village is beyond words to describe.

From the Black Sea to San Francisco (U.S.A.) wherever I met the Romanies they at once recognised me as a son of Mother India and felt close kinship. In Yugoslavia I visited several Romany families—I have already referred to the family of Advocate Svetozar Simic in Belgrade who lived in a beautiful modern apartment. The advocate who shouted, "Punjab! Punjab!" the moment he saw me, told me about his studies in the history of the gipsies and how he helped many European scholars in their work on the origin of gipsies. At their house, I met a talented Romany girl, Ivanca, a law student of Belgrade University. She was very keen to come to India to study Indian culture and languages. Many of her relations invited me to their homes and showered me with rich hospitality.

In Sofia, capital of Bulgaria, I attended meetings of gipsy intellectuals and workers. A member of the Bulgarian Parliament said at a reception: "Our language alone is sufficient to prove that our ancestors came from India. Dr. Kopernik, a renowned anthropologist, has shown, by his scientific investigations, that Hindus and Romanies are of the same blood and the same race. Our jury system is like the Indian Panchayat and our marriage customs are like those of the Indians." He also referred to half a dozen films made in Slav countries on themes based on the migration of gipsies from their original home in India owing to

an invasion several centuries ago. In Pleven, a large town in Bulgaria, I was given a warm welcome at a public meeting. I was invited to many homes and served with hot *puris* and milk.

At a reception at Budapest, Hungary, held by the Gipsy Society, the chairman, Mr. Ferkvitic—he could be taken for a native of Gujarat—said: "My studies reveal that our ancestors came from India, but I wonder why Indian scholars and historians have not claimed us as their own. Even Mr. Nehru has failed to write about us in the *Discovery of India*." Mr. Ferkvitic then described how he had met several young Indians at the First World Youth Conference in 1949 and how he had been struck by their physical resemblance to his own people.

At the Budapest meeting I met several Hungarian musicians, a poet, a doctor and many other intellectuals. One of the musicians said that he had collected fifteen hundred songs, which included many records of Indian folk songs. He suggested that Hungary and India should enter into a cultural agreement so that gipsy musicians could be invited to India. With enthusiasm he said : "We have the same blood, the same language and even the same numerals. I have been in Moscow, where I met several Indian friends. They gave me records of Indain music, which I play every day. In China I met many Pakistani friends and one of them was very much like me to look at."

In Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, I visited a Romany colony in the factory area in the company of our acting Minister, his wife, and Mr. Sondhi, First Secretary in our Legation. A gipsy journalist also went with us. An eight-year-old boy, who was playing with other children, greeted us in Indian fashion and enquired, "Are you from India?" When I asked him to tell me what he knew of

India, he replied : "Dark people like me live there." It turned out that one of the little lad's friends, Milena, had recently visited India and she knew Hindi very well. The boy himself had a book on India of which he was very fond. His mother, who looked a typical Kashmiri when she wore a *sari* lent by our Minister's wife, told us: "We are sure that our ancestors came from India and some day I shall visit the land of my ancestors." She talked of Sita, Rama, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* which she had read in a book.

In Meliak, a gipsy village, I met a couple of hundred gipsies who treated me to traditional gipsy hospitality and affection. An elderly man of seventy-two reminisced about his ancestors and told me how they used to talk of India as their ancient Motherland. In another gipsy village near Budapest a mother of eleven children said: "Our great great ancestors used to say that our race came from India. We always love India and Indian films. Please send Raj Kapoor and Nargis." Another person said, "I do love to go to India, the land of our ancestors." Yet another, pointing towards me, said: "He is of our own blood."

Everywhere I found the Romanies proud of their Indian origin. The author of *The Story of the Gipsies*,* who met many gipsies, quotes them as having said: "These Europeans think of us Romanies as dirt, when, as a matter of fact, we are at least as good as they."

The same author asks : "And what of tomorrow when we shall have seen the last gipsy?" and supplies the answer himself: "Thousand years ago, the world thought that that generation had seen the last gipsy. Five hundred years ago, the French, the English, the Italians and the Germans thought they had heard the last of him....George Borrow

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**The Story of the Gipsies* by Konard Bercovici, Jonathan Cape

gave an account of them which reads like an epitaph for their tomb. Charles Leland said the last of the gipsy had already been seen—but there are a million tents of gipsies today, as passionate and as free as they have ever been. And the gipsy will answer: "The last of the gipsies will be seen when we return to India, picking our way amidst the scattered ruins of the world."

The migration of the gipsies, as already mentioned, is the subject of numerous theories and legends. The author of the *The Story of the Gipsies* think that the exodus of the gipsies might have occurred at the time of Alexander's invasion of India. He adds: "The deeper I delve into the matter, the more am I inclined to the idea that the first great exodus of gipsies from India happened at the time of Alexander. Either they were driven out and fell into his hands or joined him willingly. Small groups probably preceded the great exodus."

Grierson and other British scholars are of the view that Mahmud of Ghazni, during his seventeen invasions of India, took several hundred thousand slaves from among the Jat and Rajput soldiers and civilians from the Punjab, Gujarat, Sind and Rajputana, and since he also took many hundred thousand slaves from the fairer people of Iran of Central Asia, the less fair Indian slaves were freed and they migrated all the way to Europe by a northern and a southern route, the first *via* Iraq and Syria, and the other *via* Egypt and Greece or *via* North Africa and Spain.

A very old legend quoted by Firdausi in the *Shahnama* (the Story of the Kings) says, that an Iranian king, Behram Gur, had requested King Shankhala of North India to send him twenty thousand musicians for a national celebration. On witnessing their performance the Iranian king was so pleased that he requested the musicians to settle down in his

country. He made them free grants of land, oxen and grain. The musicians, however, not being farmers, were unable to cultivate the land and instead consumed all the grain and the animals as well. This infuriated the Iranian king who drove them out of his country and the musicians migrated to Europe *via* Egypt or Iraq.

Here is another interesting gipsy legend, in their own words:

"We were living on the Ganges. And our Chief was a powerful Chief, a man whose voice was heard all over the land and whose judgements were final. The Chief had only one son whose name was Tchen. In the land of the Hind, there ruled then a powerful king whose favourite wife had borne him an only child, a daughter whom he named Gan. After his death his son Tchen decided to marry Gan--known as his sister—though she was not. The people were divided into two factions and a sorcerer predicted invasion and bad times. One of Skinder's (Alexander) generals came like a cyclone and killed the King of Hind, devastated and destroyed everything as the sorcerer had foretold. One of our people went to the victorious general for judgement on the matter of a brother marrying a sister. The general hit the man on the head. That very moment the great general and his horse burst and crumbled like an earthen vessel shattered upon a rock. The wind blew into the desert the remains of what had once been a great warrior.

"Two factions arose among our people. Those who opposed Tchen drove him out of the country. A great sorcerer inflicted a curse on Tchen: 'You shall for ever wander over the face of the earth, never sleep twice in the same place, never drink water twice from the same well.'"

The gipsies of Europe and America still observe many Hindu customs, especially at the time of childbirth and

marriage. The ancient Aryan custom of *swayamvar* is still observed by the gipsies in many countries and the woman chooses her husband.

Lord Krishna and Arjuna are honoured by the gipsies with the same devotion as in India. Some gipsies are also familiar with the *Ramayana*. The gipsy dances are very similar to Indian dances. One of the favourite dance numbers is the dance of Krishna and the Gopis (cowherd maidens). They also observe a special ceremony when the wife is expecting a baby. At the time of marriage, the Hindu custom of throwing rice on the heads of the groom and the bride to wish them prosperity is still observed. For several days and nights the community is entertained with music and dance on the occasion of marriages. Thirty-two days after the death of a person a young girl goes to a river with a glass containing a lighted candle and it is set afloat on the river. The entire tribe mourns the loss. The dead body is always bathed by women with salt water and wrapped in new clothes. Soap, coins, grains and shoes are placed in the coffin. The arms of the dead person are bent into a crossed position. Like the Hindus the gipsies have great veneration for ancestors and perform many ceremonies in their honour. As in the Hindu *shradh* ceremony, the gipsies make offerings of food in their funerary rites.

The gipsies have interesting legends about the birth or creation of white, black and brown races by God. Their legend says that God baked the first men and women in an oven. By mistake some were kept too long in the oven and they turned out too dark and thus was born the dark race. Next time God opened the door of the oven rather too early and the image was not properly baked and not quite ready. This was the blond race. The third time God produced images baked to the right colour and these were the Indians (ancestors of the gipsies). The author of *The*

*Story of the Gipsies* says on page 115 that the gipsies believe that God did a perfect job the third time when he produced the perfect human being.

Like the Hindus the gipsies love children and welcome more and more of them.

The gipsy numerals are decidedly connected with Sanskrit, according to Dr. Rade Uhlik. How close they are to Hindi can be seen from the following:

| *English* | *Romany* | *Hindi* |
|---|---|---|
| One | Ek | Ek |
| Two | Dui | Do |
| Three | Trin | Tin |
| Four | Store | Char |
| Five | Panch | Panch (Punj in Punjabi) |
| Six | Sho | Chhe or Chho |
| Seven | Eft (Haft in Persian) | Sat |
| Eight | Okht-Octo | Ath |
| Nine | Nu | Nau |
| Ten | Dash | Das |

For eleven the gipsies simply say *dash to ek.* Twenty is *do bar dash* (twice ten), and fifty is *panch bar dash* (five times ten). Whenever I told them my age the gipsies would say *Panch Bar Dash to Sho,* that is, five times ten plus six.

They have pure Sanskrit names for the days of the week. Monday is *Pratham Divas;* Tuesday is *Dvitiya Divas,* and Wednesday is *Tritiya Divas.* There are any number of other linguistic similarities. *Shoshoi* and *kal-ko* are nearly of the same sound as the Sanskrit *sasa* and *kalya* and exactly of the same import; for as the gipsy *shoshoi* signifies both hare and rabbit and *kal-ko* tomorrow as well as yesterday, so does the Sanskrit *sasa* signify both hare and rabbit and *kalya* tomorrow as well as yesterday. George Borrow has said that gipsies' language is more like Sanskrit than any other language in the world. He notes that their

vocabulary consists of 3,000 words, "the greater part of which are decidedly of Indian origin, being connected with Sanskrit or some other dialect (Hindi, Punjabi, Sindhi, Gujarati, etc.); the rest consists of words picked up by the gipsies during their wanderings from the East".

Professor Walter Schubrin, writing on studies by Richard Pischal (Berlin University) on Romany language, says: "Nor can we leave out his studies on the gipsy language, which, as is reported, had found a place nearest to his heart owing perhaps to his personal contacts with some of our remote (Aryan) cousins from far India established when they were sojourning in Pischal's locality."— *Indo-Asian Culture,* October 1958.

Perhaps Hitler had not heard of Pischal's findings that gipsies were of Aryan stock when he slaughtered 28,000 gipsies in Yugoslavia alone during the last war !

A Bulgarian Member of Parliament told me : "Nehru, Raj Kapoor and Nargis are the most popular heroes of the gipsies. Your Hindi films are immensely popular in this country and they understood the words and songs of Indian pictures. They remember the text and especially the melodies, which you can hear them sing after the show is over."

In several clubs and schools the boys, girls and even elderly persons sang to me songs of *Awara* and *Do Bigha Zamin.* I had not seen these films in India but the gipsies spared no pains to act as Raj Kapoor and they begged me to ask Raj Kapoor and Nargis to write to them. A gipsy sent a letter to our Embassy at Belgrade saying that his people had been able to understand seventy per cent of the words in *Do Bigha Zamin.* He appealed to the Ambassador to arrange to teach Hindi to his gipsy countrymen.

Of the Sanskritic languages, Punjabi seems to be nearest Romany. The gipsies address each other as *pra* (*bhra* in Punjabi) and *pen* (behn, also *pen,* in Punjabi) with typical central Punjab accent. Boy is called *chhohr* as in Punjabi, and a girl is *chhehr* as in Punjabi. A brother-in-law is *salo* and a son-in-law is *jamata.* A kiss is *choomi* as in Punjabi, and love is *kamava* from *kama.*

Irving Brown, an admirer of gipsies and their Hindu music, supports the theory of their Hindu origin and asks: "What is the evidence in India ? The Hindus may be said to be a people without a history. Time for them is vast and indivisible, without centuries, years, minutes; it is always eternity. However there are a few documents. In *The Ocean of the River of Stories,* composed from ancient sources by a Kashmiri poet about a thousand years ago—but which might have been written yesterday—there is an amusing picture of a certain Dom, who is a rogue, an executioner, and a musician. Dom is a general term for the chief stock from which both Western Romanies and Indian gipsies originally sprang. It gave rise to the word Rom, the usual name by which the European gipsies designate themselves ....A close observer of the present-day Dom relates that his amusements are sleeping, dreaming, sitting, talking, gambling, smoking, drinking, fighting and, above all, singing. They improvise songs, play various instruments and dance immodestly. This description might fit various primitive races, but not to the same degree that it fits the gipsy. In some parts of India the word Dom is synonymous with bard or minstrel.

"Travellers and experts have noted many close parallels between the Romanies of Europe and the Doms and other gipsy-like tribes of India. In discussing the Banjaras, one writer remarked that he was particularly impressed by the

peculiar minor key of the music of these people, 'who reminded him of the gipsies of the Lower Danube and Wallachia.' "

The Romanies (gipsies of Eastern Europe and Hungary) often asked me if there were any roving tribes like them in present-day India. The Banjaras (also called Lambadi) who inhabit parts of Mysore, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra bear a good resemblance to the colourful gipsies of Hungary. Both wear peculiar costumes of uncommon brilliance. Here is a subject needing more research.

## Chapter II

# A PROUD RACE

Likeness to Indian Languages—Sanskrit the Mother—Romany Scholar's View—A Proud Race—Philosophy of Owning Nothing—Origin of 'Rom'—Dr. Paspati's View—Common Words of Romany—900 Years Ago in Europe—Romance of 'no'—In Praise of Gipsies—The Only Free Race—Lustrous Eyes—Ancient Art of Living.

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*Most people tend to distinguish between gipsies: to call them Spanish gipsies or Hungarian gipsies or Russian gipsies and to believe that they are different and speak different languages just because they live in different countries. There is, in fact, no such distinction. They are all just gipsies, and they speak the same language basically, which tells us where they came from; north-west India, perhaps Luristan—anyhow, somewhere in the Hindu Kush area. It is not known for certain when they first came to Britain.*

*—B. V. Fitzgerald on the B.B.C.*

* * * *

*Gipsies are a foreign element in Europe. Already at the end of the eighteenth century it had been proved that they came from India. Their race-marks are also Indian, but the gipsies do not any more know anything about their original motherland. They have no relics from that time. And thus the origin may be traced only from their language, which they use among themselves, and which contains already many words of the country where they are now living. Among Dutch documents were found some 53 words in a manuscript* Clene Gypta Sprake *from the year* 1570, *most probably from a court-questioning of a gipsy. In* 1819 *a group of* 17 *gipsies was detained in Plzen in Bohemia and A. J. Puchmajer used this occasion to study the gipsies' language. His small work is the basis for study of the language of Czech gipsies. The likeness of the gipsy-language with the Indian languages may be seen from the sound articulation changes which are the same as by the new Indian languages of Indo-European origin.*

*—Dr. V. Lesny in History and Geography of Czechoslovakia.*

THE FIRST man who threw scientific light on the origin of the gipsies was Valyi Istvan, a Protestant pastor. He studied at Leyden University in the Netherlands where he met three Indian students. By studying the language spoken by these Indian students, he found nearly 1,000 close analogies with the gipsy words spoken in Hungary. He came to the conclusion that "the rules and the words of the original ancient Indian language (Sanskrit) can be found in the clearest way in the language of gipsies of Turkey, Greece, Hungary, Bohemia, Russia, Poland and Syria."

Archduke Joseph of Austria-Hungary, who was a great friend of the gipsies and wrote a grammar on their language, has quoted from the work of Valyi Istvan.

The Archduke had studied Oriental languages, among them Hindi. When he came across nomad gipsies in Bohemia in 1850, he was struck by several words spoken by them. His investigation of these words soon convinced him that these dark people had their own language which was related to Hindi. After that he took all available opportunities to meet gipsies. He visited their colonies and camps in many countries. In his preface to the gipsy grammar the Archduke wrote:

"At last, I succeeded in speaking their language quite fluently. With the aid of the more cultured gipsies I compiled a vocabulary which shows different dialectal expressions. I have finally written this outline of grammar, also taking into consideration the different rules of the special dialects of gipsies and their Indian origin. I was considerably helped in this work by the circumstance that I served in Infantry Regiment 60 from 1853-1856 which recruited its personnel from among the gipsies. At first I had much difficulty in winning their confidence because they do not like to let a foreigner learn their language but when I began speaking their language fluently I won their confidence and now I am called a Romany one of them."

The Archduke continues:

"At the head of Indian languages is Sanskrit, the holy language of Brahmins—and the base for other Indian dialects. Its alphabet is 1,500 years old, and consists of 50 letters expressing most perfectly the different sounds....

"The gipsy is very proud of his origin and his nation and he calls himself, all over the world, as *Rom* or *manush* (man). He calls every other people *gajo i.e.* peasant. The gipsies of Germany call themselves *zindo* (Hindu). They attach much value to their pure origin which is expressed especially by them in the following words:

Main hun kalo (I am dark).

Mande he dadeszkro vazt (I have a paternal land).

Main hun chacho paskero Rom (I am a real Rom).

"The ancestors of the gipsies learned to know that they who have nothing own everything without possessing anything; that possession is limitation—poverty; that the pungent odour of a rose is more than the rose; they who possess no country call all ground under their feet their own.

"The gipsies do have the ability to look backwards. They have second sight, because the sense of time limitation has gone the way of all limitations. Past and future are poor inventions of childish minds, inventions as crude as the taboos of savages and the superstition of fools."

In 1780 H.M.G. Grellman, a German philologist, collected a number of gipsy words and found that one-third of them were of Indian origin. He found that the dialect spoken at Surat was very much like the gipsy language. (See reference to Gujarati songs sung by American gipsies in the chapter on gipsy music).

A. G. Paspati, a renowned research scholar, thinks that Rom (the original name of the gipsies) is derived from Rama incarnation of Vishnu. He writes:

"Gipsy—*rom*—All the various denominations for this strange race common among foreigners are to the gipsies themselves totally unknown. It is still more to be wondered at that foreigners should never have adopted the appellation by which they call themselves, and which is common to them wherever they live whether in Asia or in Europe. Before I proceed to the explanation of this term, I will give the various names by which they are known among foreigners in various parts of the world. The German *zigeuner*, Russian *zigari, zigani,* Persian and Turkish *zengi* and *chinege*, seem to come from one and the same original; which Borrow makes to be "*zincali,* the black men of Zend or Ind": a derivation of no value. The Bulgarians call them *gupti*, the Spaniards *gitanos* (properly *giptanos*), and their haunts in the cities of Spain *gitaneria*. The English *gipsy* is from the same root. The French call them *Bohemiens*, probably from their having come to France from Bohemia, as they also have been called Germans and Flemish from their coming from those countries. All these terms are known to the gipsies, but are never used by them; here, as in other parts of the world, they scrupulously avoid all the usual foreign terms. The derivation of the Turkish *chingene* and its correspondents in other languages is still a desideratum, and probably much time will pass before its etymology will be fully explained.

"As to the term *rom*, it has a double signification—being used for man in general, and likewise for a man of their own race as distinct from one of other descent; *romni*, in like manner, means 'woman'. *Rom* is also used for 'husband,' and *romni* for 'wife', *Romano* (fem. romani) is the adjective form. This term, it appears to me, can be referred to the Sr. Rama, a name of the god Vishnu, and of three of his incarnations. By the gipsies it may have been given to their tribe as worshipping in an especial manner this god.

**A Hungarian gipsy girl who could be mistaken for a young woman from the Punjab**

A gipsy priest from Central Europe looking like an Indian 'sadhu'

Three gipsy children whom the author met near Belgrade, Yugoslavia

A gipsy factory worker and his family, Yugoslavia

The Governments of Eastern European lands, where there are more gipsies than in other European countries, provide special facilities for the schooling of gipsy children. Here is a group of gipsy children from a school in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Since gipsies are born musicians, the education of gipsy children lays stress on music. These young gipsy singers are from Czechoslovakia.

A considerable volume of research into gipsy lore has been conducted in Hungary. This girl, daughter of a fortune-teller, is a Hungarian gipsy

*Karin isi to rom*? 'where is thy husband?' *chori romni*, 'a poor woman;' *lachi romni*, 'a good woman;' *savvore o rom*, 'all the men;' *romani chip*, 'the gipsy language;' *kon dinias amare roma*, 'who struck our men?' *i romni leskeri isi phuri*, 'his wife is old.' "

From my own knowledge of the gipsies in various parts of the world, I know that wherever they are, in Delhi or in San Francisco, they have the same words for some common objects and concepts. Among these are:

Knife—Churi
Hair—Bal
Eye—Yak (Ankh)
Ear—Kan
Nose—Nak
Black—Kalo
Horse—Grai
Chief—Rai (Raja)
Great—Baro
Land—Than (Sthan in Sanskrit)
Milk—Tud (Dudh)
Meat—Mas
Water—Pani
Straw—Pus(Bhus)
Old—Puro (Burho)
Good—Lacho (Achha)
Night—Rat
Stealing—Chori
Blood—Rat (Rakt)
Mud—Chik (Chikar)
Tongue—Chib (Jibha)
Bird—Chiriklo (Chiri)
You—Tu

When exactly the gipsies went to Europe is not known The first record of them in Europe, according to Martin Block in his book *Gipsies—Their Life and Customs* is by a Georgian monk of Mt. Athos about the year 1100. By 1322 they are heard of in Crete, and by 1346 in Corfu; about 1340 a Serbian prince gave gipsy families as slaves to the Tirana monastery at the foot of the Carpathians. In 1417 their presence is recorded in Moldavia, Hungary, Germany and Switzerland (at Zurich). In 1422 we hear of them in Basle and in 1427 some appeared in Paris and told the fortunes of the populace. By the middle of the fifteenth century they had spread over every country in Europe and their name had become a household word. They crossed the

Pyrenees and in Spain met their fellows whose ancestors had come *via* North Africa some centuries earlier.

* * * *

Another authority, Charles Leland, is of opinion that Jats of north India were taken as slaves in large numbers by Mahmud and many thousands of them wandered west. According to him, Hindi was the original language of the gipsies. He adds: With regard to the origin of Romany, my brother professor, E. H. Palmer of Cambridge, has decided, on examining a vocabulary of more than 4,000 English-gipsy words collected by me, that nearly all of them, not of Greek or European origin, are Hindi or Persian, Hindi generally predominating. He gives a few typical words of Romany: *tatta pani* (*brandy*) which in Hindi (Malvi dialect) means hot-water; *baro pani*, literally 'great water', Hindi word for the sea; *mul* for worth, the same as in Hindi; *sari rati* for the 'whole night' and *sacho* for true.

Dr. Paspati discusses the interesting light that the word 'no' throws on the relationship between Sanskrit and the gipsy tongues. Here is what he says:

*Negation.—na, nanai, nasti, ma.* There are few words in all the range of the gipsy language so clear and well defined as these terms. *Na is the Sr. na,* a particle of negation. *Na,* in gipsy colloquial usage, is employed principally with verbs: as *na janava,* 'I do not know'; *na kamava,* 'I do not wish'; *na isamas ote,* 'I was not here'; *na pakiava,* 'I do not believe'; *na dikliomles,* 'I did not see him'; '*nai, isi tindo*' 'no, it is thine.' They never say *nanai dikliomles,* or *nanai janava.* In the subjunctive, *na* is inserted between *te* and the verb; as *te na dikav,* 'that I may not see'; *te na jav,* 'that I may not go'; *te na khav,* 'that he may not eat'. It is to be observed in adjectives: as *naisvali,* 'invalid'; *nasukar,* 'not handsome'; *namporeme,* 'sick'. *Nanai* is properly

used to express negation joined to the third person of the auxiliary verb-*isom*, 'I am', which is always understood: it means properly 'it is not'. It has evidently taken the place of the following *nasti*, which by the gipsies is applied to other usages. *Nanai* is a reduplication of *na*. *Nanai mindo*, 'it is not mine'; *nanai lacho*, 'it is not good'; *nanai but phuro*, 'he is not very old'; *ta na kamniovel nanai laches*, 'not to perspire is not well'; *nanai palval*, 'there is no wind'; *nanai khohaimpe*, 'it is not a lie'. *Nasti* is evidently the Sr. *nasti*, 'it is not', from *na* and *asti*, the third pers. sing. of the verb *as*, 'to be'. The Persian has a similar phrase, *nist*, composed of the neg. *net* and *est*, 'is'. So also the Slav. *niest*, 'non est', used in this form. *Nasti* is defined by Wilson as 'non-existence, not so, it is not'. The gipsies, however, have given this definition to *nanai*, and have reserved *nasti* to express impossibility or difficulty. Having lost all traces of its proper signification, it is now applied by them to all persons indistinctly, and to all numbers, whilst the similar phrase in Persian retains its proper signification. *Nasti astarghiomles*, 'I could not seize him'; *nasti keravales*, 'I cannot do it'; *amen nasti kerasales*, 'we cannot do it'; *nasti sovava*, 'I cannot sleep'; *nasti pirava*, 'I cannot walk'—and in a similar manner with all the persons and tenses of a verb. It is never used except with verbs, and the inflection of the verb itself shows the person speaking. *Ma* is a particle which is always prefixed to the imperative. It is the Sr. *ma*, a prohibitive and negative particle, chiefly prefixed to verbs in the imp. mood: as *ma kuru*, 'do not do'. With the gipsies, though heard sometimes alone, it supposes a verb which by the speaker is not uttered *ma ker tuya*, 'do thou not also'; *ma deman arman*, 'do not curse me'; *ma kush*, 'do not revile'; *ma vraker*, 'do not talk'; *maja*, 'do not go'; *ma dik*, 'do not look'; *ma sun*, 'do not hear'; *ma kha*, 'do not eat'; *ma le*, 'do not take'; *ma pi*, 'do not drink'. With the exception of this

negative particle, there is a striking similarity between mine and Borrow's terms.

This is what Samuel Roberts, who has written with authority and enthusiasm about the gipsies, says of them:

"They seem to me like houseless birds whom God feedeth and for whom He cares. They appear more than any other human beings to depend on Him alone for daily bread. They know not, it is true, much of Him: the wisest of us know but little more. They, however, may view Him in His wonders and love to live amidst His works, and if they less adore, they probably less offend.

"They live by rule and by faith and by tradition which is a part of their blood. They go about in our midst, untouched by us, but reading our secrets. They know more about us than we do about ourselves. They are our link with the East....They are better dancers than the Spaniards in their national dances and they play Hungarian music better than the Hungarians. They do few things, but they do things better than the others. They create nothing, they perpetuate. They take whatever is of use to them; they reject whatever their instinct forbids them to take. Can the world repress this race which is so elusive and slips through its gross fingers like wind?

"They are a symbol of our aspirations, and we do not know it; they stand for the will for freedom, for friendship with nature, for the open air, for change and the sight of many lands. Progress is a heavy wheel, turned backward upon us. The gipsy represents nature before civilisation. He is the wanderer whom all of us who are poets, or love the wind, are summed up in. He does what we dream. He is the last romance left in the world. His is the only free face, and the tyranny of law and progress would suppress his liberty. That is the curse of civilisation, it is tyranny,

it is the force of repression. To try to repress the gipsies is to fight against instinct, to try to cut out of humanity its rarest impulse....

"They are ignorant of the ugly modern words, the words which we have brought into sophisticate language: 'Give me half and you take half; divide, that is, in our shorthand. Then, they are part of the spectacle of the world, which they pass through like a great procession, to the sound of a passionate and mysterious music. They are here today and there tomorrow; you cannot follow them, for all the leafy tracks that they leave for each other on the ground. They are distinguishable from the people of every land which they inhabit, there is something in them finer, stranger, more primitive, something baffling to all who do not understand them through a natural sympathy."

And meeting gipsy children in Belgrade Samuel Roberts was reminded of Indians.

"There were the children who fascinated me. There were three little girls, with exactly the skin of the Hindus, and exactly the same delicately shaped face and lustrous eyes and long dark eyelashes; they were little cat-like creatures, full of humour, vivacity and bright instinctive intelligence. As we came to one end of the market, they ran up to a young girl of about fifteen, who stood leaning against a pump. She was slender, with a thin, perfectly shaped face, the nose rather arched, the eyes large, black, lustrous under her black eyebrows; thick masses of black hair ran across her forehead, under the scarlet kerchief. She leaned there, naughty, magnetic, indifferent, a swift animal, like a string bow, bringing all the East with her, and a shy wildness which is gipsies' only.

"This may represent the gipsies as faultless. They are far from faultless, but those faults can often be explained

if not wholly excused. From the very first entry of them into Europe, the hand of every man has been against them; once they were burned and hanged....

"The gipsy turns his back on great cities, once beautiful and human, now filled with smoke, noise, unnatural speed, degraded into the likeness of a vast machine, creating and devastating soulless bodies of useless tasks.

"There has been great talk of late of degeneracy, decadence, and what are supposed to be perversities in such things as religion, art, genius, individuality. But it is the millionaire, the merchant, the money-maker, the sweater, who are the degenerates of civilisation, and as the power comes into their hands all noble and beautiful things are being crushed out one after another, by some mechanical device for multiplying inferiority. Civilisation as it was thousands of years ago in China, in India, was an art of living, besides whose lofty beauty we are like street urchins scrambling in a gutter. We live to pick up scraps; they lived a tranquil and rational existence.

"This unconquerable love of freedom and of the country is not felt in the same degree by any other people on the face of the globe as it is by the gipsies, universally. It has been so through all the ages since they were first known. It seems inseparable from their nature, and must have been impressed upon it. for some good purpose, by the Almighty Power."

## Chapter III

# WANDERERS FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS

**Bogus Dukes of Egypt—A Fictitious Country—Real Ancestral Home—Nature Worship—Migration Traced—Helped Allies in War—Half Million Killed—They Helped Jews—Contribution to Music—Gipsy Theatre—Schools on Wheels—Sincere Friends—Education Progressing.**

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***A mysterious people, untamed and nomadic, the gipsies have wandered to almost every country in the world. Most of those who still lead a wandering life have kept the same physical characteristics as the early tribes—wavy dark hair, large black or brown eyes and dark skin, but the settled tribes have gradually come to look more like the people of the countries where they live. It has been said that in music the soul of the gipsy has found its fullest expression. From their ranks, too, have come writers, philosophers, poets, dancers and artists. But for the vast majority the call of the open road is irresistible.***

On a hot, dusty August day, in the year 1427, a band of extraordinary-looking foreigners was gathered at the Porte d'Orleans, Paris gateway to the pilgrim route of St. James of Compostela, clamouring for admission. The men were slight, agile, tawny types; the women were slim and sinuous. All had shining blue-black hair and flashing, penetrating eyes set deeply in high-cheek-boned faces of dark olive complexion. Against a ringing of bells and a whirring of brightly coloured revolving wooden clappers, they all seemed to be shouting at once in a strange, unknown tongue. The leaders were richly dressed in scarlets and crimsons slashed with brilliant emerald greens. Their gloved

hands flashed with barbaric jewels. Brocaded cloaks fell from their shoulders which were "decorated all about with great silver buttons".

In a kind of pidgin Latin-French they made themselves understood by the guards. They announced themselves as the Right Honourable Lord Panuel, Duke of Little Egypt, and Thomas, Earl of Little Egypt, together with their companions, bodyguards and servants to the number of one hundred and twenty. They carried with them Letters of Credence from His Holiness Pope Martin V, addressed to His Most Christian Majesty Charles VII, King of France. There was no doubt of the validity of the Fisherman's Seal on the Apostolic document they presented. The guards adinitted them to the city and the court. The gipsies had arrived in Paris.

The story they told the King was one which they recounted during the next ten years in practically every court in Europe. It is known historically, even among the gipsies themselves, as "The Great Trick". The story ran that when the Holy Family fled to Egypt from the fury of King Herod, they pleaded for shelter and help from the gipsy tribes. All help was refused for fear of offending the Pharaoh. Whereupon God sent a terrible curse upon the whole of their race and condemned them to wander for ever, despised and hated.

They said they had recently been driven out of their country of Little Egypt (it is strange that no one ever seems to have questioned the existence of this fictitious country) by the Saracens and had roamed through Bohemia and Germany and finally thrown themselves on the mercy of the Pope who had given them absolution and ordered them to do a penance of seven years, visiting all the major shrines in Europe. This penance they were now performing. The King having

heard their story could not but give them the benefit of the doubt.

They received the "safe conduct" and the city was opened to them. Alas, not for long. Their depredation into the citizens' chicken-coops and general petty thievery soon aroused the wrath of the Parisians. This was, however, slightly mitigated by the rumour that these strange people possessed wonderful powers of divination. Indeed the Parisians flocked to the gipsies in such numbers that exactly one month later, the Archbishop of Paris preached a solemn public sermon denouncing "these sorcerers and fortune-tellers", excommunicated the whole band and had them driven from the city. He then thundered a further edict of excommunication on all who had consulted them.

The gipsies fled...for the time being. A few weeks later they turned up in Amiens, where they were given eight golden livres and a safe conduct pass. Three years later, we learn from a document conserved in the Archivo Historico Provincial of Huesca, they were in Spain in considerable numbers and had received a joyous and hospitable welcome with almost undreamt of privileges from the King of Spain.

It is only as the result of very recent scholarship that we know with any certainty who and what these mysterious people are. The gipsies have always been considered an almost complete ethnic puzzle. They were thought by some to be Egyptians or Bohemians from Central Europe or even a lost tribe of Israel; others thought they were an offshoot of Manichean Persians, in fact everything short of the reality. Yet each story had something of the truth, reflecting the wanderings of these people over the last two thousand years.

Recent university expeditions to Karakorum, a region lying between the south of the western Himalayas and the western branch of the Kunlun range to the north, have established the existence of the fabulous tented empire of Karak-Khitan in India. It has been discovered that scattered Indian tribes still speak an almost identical language to that of the purest gipsy tribes. It is a Prakritic branch of the Sanskrit tongue and here a fascinating feature forces itself on our attention. At the beginning of the first century A.D., there took place a complete and absolute reformation of the Sanskrit language; yet in the speech of the gipsies, properly called Romany (from "Rom" the name of the whole collective race, which is also the name simply for "man"), there is no trace of this reform.

It is this, above all, which confirms the scholars in their conclusion that at the time of the Mongol invasions, this race cut itself off from the rest of the Sanskrit-speaking people and emigrated in two main waves to Persia. They were a low-caste race, but renowned as musicians, mighty trainers of horses and as workers in gold and silver. In Persia they were welcomed at first particularly as musicians. and were called Luri. Today in Iran they are still known by this name. The length of their stay in Persia seems to have been very considerable, where apart from their musical gifts, their ability to train horses and their skill as metal-workers made them welcome refugees.

It is generally agreed that it must have been during this period that the nature-worship they brought with them from India became transformed by their contact with Manicheanism. This would be the key to much of the incomprehensible duality of their moral and religious attitude today. The Tarot fortune-telling cards which they introduced into Europe in the fourteenth century are full of pictorial Manichean symbolism. It would seem that during this long sojourn in

Persia, the race became hardened into five main tribes. In spite of more modern nomenclature, this division has been maintained up to our day.

In course of time, fresh waves of persecution led to a further mass exodus. Those we now know as the Rom, Manouche and Sintis—the metal-workers, the musicians and straw-weavers, and the trainers of animals—went up through Syria into Armenia. Here they separated. One group went up through the Caucasus into Georgia and Russia. Another wended its way through Anatolia into Turkey where again a further split occurred. A large group pushed northwards into Rumania, Hungary and Bohemia; the other group crossed the sea to Crete and settled in Corfu. According to the contemporary Franciscan chronicler, Simeonis, this latter immigration took place at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

The early Czech *Chronicle of Dalimil,* written in 1360, specifically mentions their strange language and curious begging formula. In Greece they were and are still known as the "Acingani" from which would appear to derive the Italian form of Zingari and the better known Hungarian name of Tzigane. An early Georgian manuscript mentions a strange band of sorcerers called Atsincan, whom the Byzantine emperor Constantine Monomachus (reigning from 1040 to 1055) sent to Constantinople, to destroy the wild animals which were devouring all the game in the imperial hunting preserves.

About the same time as the first big exodus from Persia, a second group, made up of the tribes who now call themselves Gitans and Kales, went down through Arabia, up along the shores of the Red Sea, through Palestine into Egypt where they remained for a considerable time. Later driven out by Moslem invasions, they crossed through Libya along the North African coast into Spain.

They arrived in England about 1490. One band crossed to Ireland and another, headed by John Faw, who also called himself Earl of Little Egypt, was received by King James IV of Scotland. The King empowered him by Royal Writ, dated 1504, to exercise full authority over all his gipsy subjects. By the opening of the sixteenth century the Romany race was established in every country in Europe. From 1555 to 1780 a tremendous wave of persecution, branding them as heretics and sorcerers, swept through Christendom. They nevertheless survived with their language, customs, taboos and trades intact. The Emperor Joseph II, abolishing serfdom, gave them freedom to wander wherever they wished, after his mother, Maria Theresa, had failed to settle them in villages. In the last century the Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria not only entertained them at court but compiled a very complete gipsy grammar and spoke Romany fluently.

Obviously as nationalistic segregation hardened in Europe, the gipsies' complete disregard for frontiers raised almost insoluble political problems. By the early part of the nineteenth century they had penetrated into North America. An interesting feature of their large settlement in the State of Pennsylvania is that these people speak the purest of all the Romany dialects of which there are now fourteen. Numerous tribes settled in all the South American republics.

During the last war, more than five hundred thousand of them perished in gas-chambers and concentration camps. Those who escaped often fought with conspicuous bravery and ingenuity with the Allied partisan forces. It is interesting to recall at this point that because of the enemy occupying forces' almost superstitious dread of these people, they were able to help hundreds of Jewish victims in French concentration camps to escape into neutral zones, under the

clandestine leadership of a brilliant Jesuit priest from Poitiers. For his work in this connection the Rev. Father Fleury, S. J. was appointed, at the end of the war, to be Chaplain-General of all the gipsies and nomads of France.

This outstanding and erudite churchman and many of his confreres as well as a growing body of judicial and administrative leaders are rightly concerned about the future of the gipsies of today. By the very historical circumstances of their survival they are confirmed as a nomadic people. Is there in our modern civilisation a place for these people? Since there are between five and six million of them in the world, an answer is required. With understanding and sympathy for their difficulties, acknowledgement of their contribution and needs, there is undoubtedly a solution to their problems. Like the wind that carries the pollen and seeds of strange plants and trees, to give variety and strength to the indigenous flora, so these people have preserved in their racial memory various forms of behaviour, folk-lore, music and, perhaps most important of all, an intuitive sense of the forces of nature that we, in our urban conception of life, are in danger of forgetting and losing.

All great Hungarian musicians have confirmed that the Tzigane, though not necessarily contributing an original musical idiom, have nevertheless preserved, by their very traditionalism, essential Magyar musical forms which the people themselves had forgotten. In the United States, according to Duke Ellington, Django Rheinhardt, the famous gipsy guitarist, did more for the universal dissemination of valid Jazz as a musical form than perhaps anyone else. Since the eighteenth century the Gitanos have re-vivified Spanish music and have inspired composers such as de Falla, Albeniz, Granados and Segovia who have taken their places as the geniuses of Spanish musical culture. This is but one sphere in which they have made useful contributions. The late Tikno

Adjams of the University of Louvain was not only a great philosopher of the school of Bergson but a very fine poet; yet he remained always one with his people.

Since 1930 the Soviets have produced a gipsy newspaper called, not unsurprisingly, *O Nevo Drom* (The New Way) and have discovered many able writers among the nomads. The Gipsy Theatre in Moscow was certainly the most popular form of all entertainment for Muscovites during the war. Between the wars, a famous gipsy school for boys was founded at Uzhord in Ruthenia, conditioned to the particular needs of its pupils and later a similar scheme was put into effect in Kygor in South Moravia. Here a secondary school boy has recently written an extremely able history of his people and has since (walking in the footsteps of George Borrow, the first man to translate the Bible into Romany) helped with a new translation of the Bible in the gipsy tongue.

In France modern sociologists have taken into account the devastating effects of forcing the nomad into an urban, sedentary life where he degenerates rapidly into a deplorable type. The Rev. Father Fleury hit on the idea of transforming large motor coaches into travelling schools following in the wake of the caravans, which are now mostly motorised. Certainly without attempting to change the essential pattern of the life of these people, it should be possible with an intelligent grasp of their problems to find young educationalists who are willing to travel and adopt the principles of modern educational psychology to their different needs.

Living and working with them, deep-rooted prejudices fall quickly away. Too often the petty dishonesty and the lack of hygiene are the effect of longstanding oppression. A small example of the attitude towards hygiene can be taken from the above-mentioned travelling school. Freed for once from oppressive laws and able to camp freely by river or

lakeside or even village pumps, the youngsters with no compulsion would stop, strip and bathe every day regardless of the temperature. Considering their ages ranged from 13 to 18 they were at least as hygienically-minded as the inmates of similar age in many "prep-schools" on either side of the Atlantic.

Those who would like to see first-hand as many of the varied aspects of the gipsy tribes as possible cannot do better, if in Europe, than visit the annual reunion of the Romany from all over the world, which takes place once a year between May 24 and 26 in the wild Camargue country in Southern France. A few miles only from Arles, the famous pilgrimage of the Stes. Maries de la Mer is marked by great devotion. Here they all arrive to pay their respects to the Marys of Bethany and to Ste. Sara, the patron saint of the gipsies, who has her shrine in the curious and mysterious Mithraic crypt of the ancient Romanesque church. Here you will meet them all : circus millionaires and lawyers, poets, artists and artisans, musicians and dancers, be they Rom or Manouche, Sinti, Gitan or Kale with all their differences and all their similarities. They come from every part of the globe, from across the Atlantic or from Eastern Europe for here cross the gipsy caravan routes of the world. Here too you will meet a new generation of the young who, deprived of their traditional trade as horse-dealers, have become automobile mechanics of no mean ability.

This is the great gathering of the Rom, a people who are vital, sometimes unthinkingly cruel, great lovers of children, too often light-fingered by lack of education but impulsive and capable of tremendous devotion to their friends be they Gageo (white men) or not. It is a friendship worth the patience and effort of winning.

An account of their present educational status follows:
*England*—Assimilation in State and church primary

schools since 1908. Some absenteeism, especially in the spring. Small percentage continue to secondary schools.

*France*—Small mobile school experiment under church auspices. No formal State educational facilities exist as yet.

*Spain*—Special educational facilities provided in the Sacromonte Settlement Area, under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Granada.

*U.S.S.R.*—Special gipsy schools adapted to particular needs already exist in large urban centres. Widespread effort in rural areas being made, with mobile instructors. Elementary teaching is given in both Romany and Russian. Classes in technical schools are also adapted to their particular aptitudes.

*Morocco*—Nomad mobile schools have been organised under the direction of a religious order, with centre in Casablanca.

*Germany*—Attempted assimilation in State schools has been made. The problem is at present under Government scrutiny.

*Sweden*—In 1954 the Swedish Government appointed a Gipsy Commission. The investigation embraced practically the entire Swedish gipsy population. Existing experiment with mobile schools found not entirely satisfactory. It is now proposed to maintain mobile schools during the summer, and during the winter months to assimilate the gipsy children in ordinary state schools, but to create special classes such as exist for foreigners. It is proposed to manitain a Permanent Consultant on Gipsy Affairs under the Social Welfare Board.

*Finland*—In 1954, there were 3,569 gipsies in Finland. The Social Research Bureau of the Ministry for Social Affairs found that one-fifth of the total population had gone to

primary schools while one quarter had been to school for some time, but later had given up attendance. It was found that one-third of the adult gipsies were illiterate and more than half the rest could not write. Urgent consideration is now being given to implement the recommendations of the Bureau.

These countries have been chosen at random, showing a growing interest in the problems involved in providing necessary education for the children of the Rom. There is a general realisation among nearly all governments that this is one of the many educational challenges which must be met. Social workers who have already been appointed by their governments to tackle the difficulties involved, have found their work rewarding and satisfying.

Among the many who have devoted untiring efforts on behalf of these peoples are numbered the names of Walter Starkie of Trinity College, Dublin, for many years head of the British Institute in Madrid; the Abbe Fluery, S. J. of Poitiers; the Abbe Bathelemy of Verdun, who has the advantage of a perfect knowledge of Romany; C. H. Tellhagen of the Nordiska Museum of Stockholm and Ivar Lo-Johannson, one of Sweden's most popular writers—to mention just a few.

All are agreed on one point: that even when the gipsy children attend the normal state schools it is absolutely essential to make provision for their special needs. There must be a wider disciplinary tolerance and relaxation of strict timetables to avoid any sense of confinement. This is particularly true of the primary grades. If this is done it should then be possible to assimilate the age groups 10 to 15 into the normal classes.

A serious suggestion comes from a French writer on gipsy lore, Jean-Louis Febvre. He proposes that social

workers on gipsy problems from all countries should take advantage of the yearly gathering of the Rom at Stes. Maries de la Mer to discuss with the elders of all the different tribes these pertinent questions which require so urgent an answer. It has happened before in history, this calling together of an immense Romany Kriss or Court of Gipsies. Their elders are often very wise in the ways of the different tribes and as M. Febvre says in his book, *Les Fils du Vent* "their help would undoubtedly of the greatest assistance to all".

Courtesy—*Courier*, Paris

## CHAPTER IV

# THEIR NAMES AND ORIGIN

Various Names—'Kalo' (Dark) Their Code-Word—Flood of Theories—Research on Romany—Their Migration and Settlements—When Did They Come to Europe?—Faked Egyptian Origin—Letters From Emperor—Why Persecution—False Charges—Extermination by Fire—Life in Danube District—Truest Lyric Poets—Women, Bread-Winners—Friends of Gipsies—Six Million Survive.

### A Historical Survey

FOR MORE than five hundred years the gipsy people have traversed East and Central Europe, wandering restlessly from place to place. In general they live at the present day among nations which have long ago been definitely settled and become organised, following their nomadic customs and their peculiar manners and customs under individual tribal chiefs. Even at the date of their first appearance in Europe the gipsies were able to give no adequate account of their origin or of their first home. The names which they apply to themselves are not without importance from an historical and ethnographical point of view. They call themselves by the old Indian name of an unclean caste, *rom* man, *romni* woman. Another self-bestowed title is *kalo* (black), the opposite term to which, *parno* (white), is applied to all non-gipsies. Finally, the gipsies also style themselves *manusch* (people), while foreigners are known as *gadsio* (strangers). Upon rare occasions, and generally only in the course of public debate, they address one another as *sinte*[1] (comrades). This word, which can bear the sense of "Indian" in

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[1]Hindu; cf. the little Aryan tribe of the Sindoi mentioned by Herodotus, who carried on trade on the Taman peninsula, and on the east frontier coast of Pontus to Anapa.

general reminds us of the Sindoi nationality of the Indian peninsula, and also of the "river and district Indus" (Indian Sindhu); the related language Sindhi remained that of an outcast tribe in the Punjab known as the "Changar", which still wanders over those districts at the present day, penetrating even to the interior of Persia.

More numerous are the names applied to the gipsies by the people with whom they came in contact. The German word "Zigeuner" is probably derived from the Phrygian-Lycaonian sect of the "Athinganoi," mentioned at the outset of the ninth century by such Byzantine writers as Theophanes. On the other hand, M. J. de Goeje derived the name in 1875 from *tsjengi; i.e.*, musicians, dancers, etc. According to Dritten the name is connected with the above-mentioned "Cangar" in Nearer India. It is, however, certain that the Germans received the name from the Czechs (*cigar, cingan, cikan*), who took it from the Magyars (*cigany*); the latter got it from the Rumanians (*cigan*), who again borrowed it from the Bulgarians [(a) *cigan* or (a) *ciganin*]. The root of the word is probably to be found in the medieval Greek. L. Wiener in 1902 derived both words from a root *cik* or *cink*, meaning "hammer" and "metal-working" in Oriental languages, which he connects with a Byzantine word for a house for playing ball; the ball-play in this case consisted of hammer-throwing. The first gipsies, moreover, whose existence in Europe has been demonstrated, were workers in metal and braziers (at Modon in the Peloponnese; at the beginning of the fifteenth century). The name "Zigeuner" became general only in Eastern Europe and Italy (*zingaro*); other names were used by the West Europeans. On their arrival in Central Europe the gipsies announced themselves to be Egyptians, whence their name *pharao nepe* (Pharoah's people), still in use among the Magyars. In the Low-

German-speaking countries the gipsies were originally known as Suyginer, Zigoner, or even "Hungarians," and afterwards as "Tatern" or Tartars; in France they were called Bohemians, as they came from Bohemia with letters of protection from King Sigismund of Hungary and Bohemia.

Since the time of the appearance of the gipsies in Europe, the flood of theories respecting their origin and descent has mounted high. After the interesting linguistic essay of Andrew Boorde in 1542, one of the earliest dissertations, "de Cingaris", is to be found in the work of the Netherland Hellenist Bonaventura Vulcanius, *De literis et lingua Getarum* (Leyden, 1542); Job Ludolf also paid some attention to their vocabulary in the commentary to his "Ethiopian History" published in 1691. The majority of scholars agree with Miklosich that the name of the sect of the Athinganer (Greek word meaning the untouched or those of another faith of *lamasasiyya*, the Arab name of the Samaritans) has been transferred to the gipsies (*cingani*). Others looked for their origin in Zeugitana (Carthage), a province formed under Diocletian and Constantine. Others again identified them with the Zygians, Canaanites, Saracens, Amorites, and Jews, or regarded them as the descendants of Chus, the son of Cham (Genesis x, 6). The Hungarian chronicler Pray made a nearer guess at the truth in considering their first home to have been the former Seljuk kingdom of Rum, as the gipsies call themselves Rom. On their first appearance many assumed that they were pilgrims from Egypt, who were performing a seven years' penitential pilgrimage, in expiation of the refusal of their ancestors to receive the infant Christ in Egypt, when he was fleeing from Herod with his parents. These and similar legends are related at the present day by wandering gipsy tribes in Hungary and in the Balkan territories. Here we have an explanation of the tenacious adherence to the belief in their

Egyptian origin. The gipsy leaders also contributed to the spread of this belief; after 1,400 they styled themselves "kings," "dukes," or "counts of Egypt Minor," and appeared as rulers of distinction in every district. In the little town of Furstneau was a gravestone, erected on the vigil of St. Sebastian (19th January), 1445, to the deceased "noble lord Sir Panuel, duke of Egypt Minor and lord of the stag's horn in that country." The coat of arms upon the stone displayed a golden eagle crowned, and above the tilting helmet a crown with a stag. Another monument with a fantastic coat of arms existed in the neighbourhood of Backnang (Wurtemberg), dated 1453, to the "noble count Peter of Kleinschild."

There is no doubt that the gipsies had leaders, and that those who live in tents have leaders at the present day; these leaders have a distinctive sign, such as an embroidered cloak, cloth, or goblet. The several tribes of the nomadic gipsies are also social units in so far as they are under the government of one Voivod. In practice they are nowhere tolerated in large hordes, and have consequently broken up into smaller independent communities or societies (*mahlija*, from *mahlo*—friend), under individual chieftains, the *schaibidso*. In important cases these leaders appeal to the decision of the Voivod, who may be spending his time with one or another tribe. The *schaibidso* is elected by the tribe, and the Voivod confirms his appointment by eating bread and salt with him in public; he then commands the *mahlija* in question to regard the *schaibidso* as his plenipotentiary. Among the nomadic gipsies the position of Voivod is hereditary at the present day; if a minor should inherit, the position is occupied until his majority by one of his nearest relations. The installation of a Voivod is a very simple ceremony. The Voivod recites a form of oath, is lifted up by his tribesmen while the women throw crab-apple seeds upon him to keep away evil spirits. The Voivod, among the nomadic gipsies

at the present day, occupies a position which is merely honourable; formerly every *mahlija* paid him a yearly tribute proportioned to the position and the number of its members.

In the case of a people like the gipsies, whose early traditions have practically disappeared, the only means of establishing their origin is the study of their language. This attempt was made in 1697 by Joh. Chr. Wagenseil (1633-1705); but what he considered in his preface to his *De-libera civitate Norimbergensi commentatio* as a gipsy language was the German-Jew thieves' language or jargon. Similarly Laur. Hervas confused the Italian thieves' language with the gipsy language (1787). The investigations of Joh. Chr. Chr. Rudiger (1751-1822) in 1782 were based upon inadequate material and weakened by inadequate linguistic knowledge; but both he and Heinr. Mor. Gottl. Grellmann 1756-1804), whose work, the *Zigeuner*, is historic, arrived independently at the conclusions that the gipsy language is allied to the Indian. It is not generally known that this opinion was shared by Immanuel Kant.[1] Previously, however, in 1776 the Vienna *Anzeigen aus samtlichen K. K. Erblandern* (6th series, No. 94) had published a letter by one Hauptmann Szekely, of importance for its bearing upon the origin of the gipsies; it stated that Valyi, the priest at Almas (Hungary), had made the acquaintance of Malabar students while at the University of Leyden, had compiled a small Malabar glossary and read it aloud to the Hungarian gipsies of his district, who had understood almost every word. Investigation in this direction was continued by August Friedr. Pott in 1844, and the fact was scientifically proved that the original home of the gipsies was in the northwest of Nearer India. "Notwithstanding its unusually debased and corrupted character," their language in some degree

[1] *Berliner Monatschrift* of November, 1785, Vol. V-27.

may still pride itself "on its relationship to the most perfectly constructed of all languages, the proud Sanskrit." Further investigations have definitely settled the fact that the gipsy language belongs to the same group as the Dardu languages spoken in Kafiristan, Dardistan, Kashmir, and Little Tibet.

**Their Migrations and Settlements**

The science of comparative philology has clearly proved the gipsies to be a branch of the Hindu nationality; it has also shown us by what route the gipsies left India, and in what countries their migrations have been interrupted for a longer or shorter period. This demonstration was the work of the Viennese philologist Franz Miklosich.[1] who collected the words of foreign origin in the gipsy language and examined their relative numerical proportion. The causes which drove the gipsies to migration and the date at which their wanderings began are shrouded for ever in obscurity. It is, however, tolerably certain that more than one migration took place. Possibly we have here the explanation of the fact that in many countries, where they are now naturalised, they are divided into two or more castes. Individual advances or disruptions may have taken place at an early date, though hardly in the age of Herodotus (cf. earlier footnote the remarks on the word "Sindoi"), while the first great movement or movements did not begin before the Christian era. The round number A.D. 1000 was given by Miklosich as the result of his philological investigations, but he has now withdrawn it (Dissertation of February 9, 1876). The Persian and Armenian elements in the European dialects clearly show that the gipsies must have made their way first through Armenia and Persia, and remained a consider-

[1] *Uber die Mundarten and die Wanderungen der Zigeuner Europas*, III 2, laid before the Academy of Vienna on February 21, 1872, and published in 1874.

able time in those countries. They entered Persia under the Sassanid dynasty, and were given the marshy districts on the Lower Euphrates as a settlement. They readily made common cause with the Arab conquerors; but after the death of the Caliph Mamun (833) they left their settlements, and disturbed the country by their plundering raids, until Ojeif ibn Ambassa was obliged to bring them to reason by force of arms. Karsten Nieubhr in 1784 (in the *Teutschen Merkur*, II,) and Ulr. Jasp. Seatzen in 1854 have treated of the gipsies in Diarbekr and about Haleb. The Armenian "Bosha" (that is, vagabonds), the gipsies of the Armenian faith (the Mohammedan gipsies of Asia Minor are known as "Chingene," or "Chinghiane"), who are chiefly to be found at Bujbat in the *vilayat* of Sivas when not engaged in their favourite occupation of wandering, speak a language which possesses an unusually sparse vocabulary (about six hundred words in all; no songs!), but undoubtedly belongs to the Indian branch of the Aryan family of languages; their chief occupation is sieve-making. Neither in Turkish nor in Russian Armenia, whither part of them have migrated since 1828, do they bring their disputes before the state tribunals, but before the council of their elders, presided over by the Athopakal (expressly confirmed in office by the Porte, formerly called Jamadar); in Russian Armenia he is associated with an Ustadar or secular caste-chieftain.

From Armenia members of the gipsy nationality may have migrated to North Africa through Syria and thence, though not before the nineteenth century, to the centre and north-west of South America, where, following the convenient waterways, they infest one republic and town after another (thus they visit Guayaquil in Ecuador every two or three years). Another and stronger division entered Europe through Phrygia and Lycaonia and across the Hellespont. Greece is to be regarded as the first European home of all

the gipsies who are dispersed throughout Europe, including Spain. There is tolerable evidence for the presence of gipsies in Byzantium at the outset of the ninth century; and in Crete in the year 1322 we hear of them from the Franciscan Simon Simeonis. About 1398 the Venetian governor of Nauplion, Ottaviano Bruno confirmed the privileges granted by his predecessors to John chieftain of the Acingani. The Venetians allowed the gipsies to settle in the Peloponnese on payment of certain dues. Many ruins still known as Egyptian or gipsy fortresses, remain as evidence of their occupation. German travellers in the second half of the fifteenth century, such as Felix Fabri (von Schmid; 1442-1502), Bernhard of Breidenbach (died 1497), the Pfalzgraf Alexander of Veldenz. Arnold von Harff, the Knight of Cologne (1471-1505), report the presence of these "Egyptian" settlers. In Corfu "Vageniti" were to be found before 1346.[1] About 1370-1373 there was a fully organised gipsy colony, the members of which are mentioned as being in the service of the barons Theodoros Kavasilas. Nicolo di Donato of Altavilla, and Bernard de Saint-Maurice. About 1386 a "feudum Acinganorum" was founded from this colony, first conferred upon the baron Gianuli di Abitabulo, then in 1540 upon the scholar Antonio Eparco, who carried on a correspondence with Melanchthon; in 1563 it passed into the hands of the Count Theodoro Trivoli. In the first half of the fourteenth century those migrations in the Balkan Peninsula took place in the course of which the Albanians occupied Attica and the Peloponnese, while numerous Armenian families settled in Moldavia and many Rumanians migrated to the slopes of Mount Pindos; at that moment a large number of the gipsies began to advance into Wallachia. They must have been settled in the

[1]Documents of the Latin Empress Katharina of Valois; cf. the genealogical on page 340.

country by 1370, for in 1387 the Hospodar Mircea the Old confirmed a donation of forty Zalassi (tent) gipsies, made by the last of his predecessors, Layko (Vlad I), to the monastery of St. Maria and Tismana (Wallachia Minor) and to that of St. Antonius, "na Vodici" and others. When Wallachia afterwards became tributary to the Turks, the gipsies may have begun to migrate in large numbers to Transylvania and Hungary. Hence they spread over the whole of Europe. It was not until 1820-1830 that Alexander Ghika relaxed the serfdom of the gipsies in Wallachia, which was finally abolished on March 3, 1856.

In the year 1417 the first gipsies appeared in the Hanse towns on the North Sea and Baltic. They produced commendatory letters from the Emperor Sigismund, and repeated the story of their Egyptian origin and their seven years' penitential pilgrimage, and thus gained the support of both Church and State as well as that of private individuals. In 1418 we find them also in Switzerland. However, this friendly reception was soon followed by persecution, in accordance with the somewhat barbarous spirit of the age.

It was not so much the actual misdeeds or the annoying presence of the strangers as their unusual customs that attracted the attention of the authorities. It was also to the prejudice of this miserable and harmless race that they came from districts more or less in possession of the Osmans. They were regarded as the advance guard or as the spies of the "hereditary enemies of Christendom." Thus the recess of 1479 of the German Imperial Diet proclaimed, "with regard to those who are called gipsies and constantly traverse the land, seeing that we have evidence to show that the said gipsies are the spies and scouts of the enemy of Christianity, we command that they are not to be suffered to enter or to settle in the country, and every authority shall take due measures to prevent such settlement and at the next assembly shall

bring forward such further measures as may seem advisable." In the following year the Diet of Freiburg declared the gipsies outlaws; that is to say, the murderer of a gipsy went unpunished. However, the gipsies were steadily reinforced by new arrivals from Hungary, and these measures produced little effect. In any case it was found necessary to renew them in the recess of the Diets of 1500, 1544, 1548 and 1577. In September 20, 1701, the Emperor Leopold declared that on the reappearance of the gipsies "the most drastic measures would be taken against them". A worthy counterpart to this decree is the regulation of the Count of Reuss, published on July 13, 1711, and made more stringent on December 12, 1713, and May 9, 1722, to the effect that "all gipsies found in the territory of Reuss were to be shot down on the spot".

Every conceivable crime was laid to the charge of the gipsies: among other accusations it was said that they exhumed dead bodies to satisfy their craving for human flesh. In consequence of a charge of this nature forty-five gipsies were unjustly executed in 1782 in the country of Hont (northwest Hungary). The accusation is based upon a misunderstanding of their funeral customs, in which the strongest characteristic of gipsy religious sentiment, the feeling of fear, is vigorously emphasised. In a lonely corner of the village churchyard or at the edge of some secluded wood the corpse is interred, and the spot is marked with a curious post shaped like a wedge, the upper end of which is hardly visible above the surface of the ground, while the lower end almost touches the head of the corpse. This custom is connected with an older use, now disappearing, in accordance with which the relatives took away the head of the corpse after a certain time, buried it elsewhere and drove the post deep into the earth in its place—solely for the purpose of hastening the process of putrefaction. Only after complete

putrefaction of the body, according to gipsy belief, can the soul enter the "kingdom of the dead," where it then lives a life analogous to that of earth. Gipsies may have been surprised in the performance of this custom and have been consequently accused of eating the corpse.

By degrees the gipsies advanced from Germany over the neighbouring parts of east and northern Europe. They entered Poland and Lithuania in the region of Vladislav II Jag-(i)ellon. In 1501 King Alexander I granted a charter to Vasil, the "woyt cyganski." The Diet of 1557 ordered the expulsion of the strangers, and this decree was repeated in 1565, 1578, 1607 and 1618. The gipsies, however, found life in this country very tolerable. They were governed by a leader of their own, whose position was confirmed by the king of Poland and by Prince Radizwill in Lithuania. The last of these gipsy "kings" was Jan Marcinkiewicz (died about 1790), who was recognised as such in 1778 by Karol Stanislaw Radizwill. In 1791 they were given settlements in Poland. At the outset of the sixteenth century, the gipsies entered Finland and also the north of Russia. Catherine II put an end to their nomadic existence by settling them on the crown lands, with a guaranteed immunity from taxation for four years. Many of them are living in Bessarabia (in 1834 they amounted to 18,738 out of the 48,427 in the whole of Russia not including Poland), at Bjelgorod, and in the neighbourhood of Taganrog; but these South Russian gipsies generally came into the country through Rumania and not by the circuitous route through Poland. They met with far worse treatment in Sweden; the first mention of them in that country belongs to 1572. In 1662 they were banished by a royal decree which ordered the execution of any gipsy who returned (a Moravian decree of 1590 is couched in similar terms). Christian III of Denmark (where the strangers had been known since 1420) issued a decree in 1536 ordering

them to leave the country within three months. After Frederick II had reiterated this order in 1561, Denmark was soon freed from the intruders. More fortunate was the fate of those scattered bodies who reached England about 1450, and Scotland about 1492; in spite of their proscription by Henry VIII in 1531, and the decrees of his daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, their numbers increased considerably (see later portions for this point). They were subject to a "king" from the Lee family: the last of these, King Joseph Lee, died in 1884. In 1827 a society was formed in England to improve the position of the gipsies.

In most of the European countries the gipsies met with an unfriendly reception as soon as they arrived. In 1422 they entered Italy (Bologna), but abandoned the country in a few years, as the clergy opposed them both by word and deed. The band which appeared in France in 1447 was allowed only five years of peace. When the gipsies plundered the little town of la Cheppe (north-east of Chalons-sur-Marne) they were driven out by the peasants. In scattered bodies they travelled about the country until 1504.

The first decree of banishment was then issued against them, and was repeated with greater stringency in 1539. Their extermination by fire and sword was decreed by the Parliament of Orleans in 1560, and actually carried out by Louis XIII and Louis XIV. Only a small proportion of the gipsies were able to find refuge among the Basques, who had been visited by individual gipsies as early as 1538. But on the night of December 6, 1802, the gipsies in that country were taken prisoners, with few exceptions, by the order of the prefect of the Basses Pyrenees and shipped to Africa. In Spain a band of gipsies appeared near Barcelona in 1447 and met with a favourable reception. They suffered little or no harm from the decree of banishment issued by Ferdinand

the Catholic (1499), repeated in 1539, 1586, 1619, or from the prohibition of Philip IV of 1633 (extended in 1661 and 1663) against their use of their own language and their nomadic habits. Greater, from another point of view, was the influence of the regulations of Charles III, of September 19, 1783; to those gipsies who renounced the use of their "gerigonza" (gipsy language), wandernig habits, and dress, this decree granted toleration; it threw open all offices to them, and allowed them to practise any trade, thereby furthering the process of denationalisation. In southern Spain they continue a highly satisfactory existence at the present day.[1]

## Gipsy Life in the Danube

Hungary and Transylvania formed the second resting-place and in a sense the new home of the gipsies in Europe. They must have reached these countries shortly after 1400, for as early as 1416, gipsies from Hungary are found in Moravia, Bohemia, and Silesia, and in the rest of Germany in 1417. Those who wandered to Germany brought letters of commendation from the Hungarian Palatine Nicholas Gara to Constance, where the emperor Sigismund was staying at that time; he was thus induced to grant them the charter previously mentioned (its existence is confirmed by a letter of the Hungarian count Thurzo of the year 1616). The gipsies who were left in Hungary and Transylvania enjoyed certain privileges, like the Rumanians and Jews who possessed no land, as "serfs of the king," in so far as their settlement upon private property was conditional upon the royal consent. As armourers they also enjoyed the special favour of the ecclesiastical and secular authorities. Thus on September 23, 1476, King Matthias allowed

[1] *The World History, Vol. V. South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, pp. 415—424.*

the town of Hermannstadt to employ the gipsies upon necessary works; and on April 8, 1487, he ordered the Voivod to leave undisturbed those gipsies who had been conceded to the people of Hermannstadt. In 1496 Vladislav II granted a charter to the Voivod Thomas Polgar, whereby he and his people were to be left unmolested, as they were then preparing munitions of war for Sigismund, the then bishop of Funfkirchen. As in Poland the dignity of gipsy king had been conferred upon nobles before 1731, so also in Transylvania and Hungary the ruler chose the chief Voivod of the gipsies from the ranks of the nobility. In Transylvania the position was usually occupied by one nobleman and at times by two. In Hungary, on the other hand, there were always four chief Voivods, whose seats were Raab, Leva, Szatmar, and Kaschau. The gipsies were under their jurisdiction, and were obliged to pay a poll-tax of one florin a year. Under Peter Vallon, who was made chief Voivod of Transylvania by Prince Georg Rakoczy, and even allowed to take the oath, the imposition was abolished by law.

From the date of their first appearance in the Theiss and Carpathian districts, the gipsies were especially famous as musicians. In this capacity they found employment at the courts of the princes and magnates; in 1525 they were even "installed" at the national assembly of Hatvan as musicians. Their yearning, heart-rending melodies, composed, as it were, of passionate sighs, are played with incomparable purity, certainty and feeling. Soon this romantic people acquired a privileged position among the Hungarians: noble and citizen, peasant and student, alike delighted in the sound of the gipsy violin. These poetic nomads remain one of the most interesting features both of the Hungarian plains and of the Transylvanian forests. The fame of such gipsy musicians as Barna, Berkes, Bihari, Patikasus, Racz, Sala-

modern gipsy
rm girl. member
a Hungarian
gricultural co-
perative

A gipsy boy
from
Hungary

Two gipsy girls clad in saris seen on either side of an Indian visitor to Moscow

A Russian gipsy woman who invited the author to tea in Moscow in 1960

Not Kashmir but Central Europe. A gipsy peasant and his son stand in front of their hut

A group of gipsies from Bulgaria

**A nomadic gipsy girl: picture reproduced from a Bulgarian album**



**Gipsy children from Rumania**

mon, or of the female violinist Zinka Panna, soon extended far beyond the frontiers.

Here, also, in Transylvania and Hungary are to be found the truest lyric poets among the gipsies, men living in joyful seclusion from the world, or considering the world only in the light of their own experience. The existence of a ballad poetry among the gipsies has long been denied, without due consideration of the fact that a people of such high musical talent could not fail to possess a store of ballads. It is difficult to imagine anything more perfect than these lyrics, which are to be found among the wandering gipsies of Hungary and the Balkan territories by those who will take the pains to search. The authorship of these songs is unknown; they come forth from the people, and remain a national possession. One poetess only has left two hundred and fifty gipsy poems in writing, the Serbian wandering gipsy Gima Ranjicic (died 1891). Beauty and education were the curse of her life. A reader of her poems published in a German translation can reconstruct a life of suffering, of desperate struggle, and unfulfilled hope. Beyond this, the intellectual achievements of the gipsies are few. Whether the Madonna Painter Antnio de Solari(o), known as il Zingaro (about 1382-1455), or the English mystic, John Bunyan, are to be accounted gipsies, is a matter of doubt.

The gipsy women earn a fair amount of money by the practice of incantations, fortune-telling, card play, and the like, and enjoy a reputation among the villagers as leeches and magicians. In the belief of this outcast people there are women and sometimes men in possession of supernatural powers, either inherited or acquired. Most of the female magicians (*chohalji*, also known as "good women"—*latcho** *romni*) have been trained by their mothers from early

*Accha in Hindi.

childhood and have inherited the necessary prestige. They play a considerable part in all the family festivals of the wandering gipsies.

In other countries these restless strangers have been forced to settle down; but most of the gipsies in Hungary, in the Balkans (the Mohammedan Zapori), and in America continue their nomadic existence to the present day, almost invariably within the limits of the country or nationality in question; hence they are able to maintain their ancient customs more or less unchanged. But in these countries the governments have taken a truly benevolent interest in the gipsies, and have done their best to make them a settled and civilised race. Thus by a regulation of November 13, 1761, the Queen-Empress Maria Theresa ordered the name "gipsy" to be changed to that of "new Hungarian" (in Magyar, *uj magyarok*) and the gipsies to be settled in the Banate. The authorities built them huts, and gave them seed, and even cattle; but as soon as the supplies were consumed, the objects of this benevolence started again upon their wanderings. Only a small body remained and became a settled industrial community. On November 29, 1767, Maria Theresa issued another and more stringent edict, to the effect that the gipsy children were to be taken away and brought up by "Christian" people at the expense of the State, while the marriage of gipsies was absolutely prohibited. This edict produced little or no effect in comparison with the trouble involved. On October 9, 1783, Joseph II issued a "general regulation" containing the following severe conditions: gipsy children were not to run about naked in public places, and were to be taken early to school and to church. All children above four years of age must be redistributed every two years among the neighbouring communities in order to secure diversity of instruction. Adults were strictly prohibited from wandering; even the settled gipsies were only to visit the

yearly market under special supervision. They were forbidden to trade as horse-dealers. The use of their language was forbidden under a penalty of twenty strokes, and intermarriage was strictly prohibited. More indulgent were the instructions issued on April 15, 1784. The six hundred families living in the Bukovina, according to the official register of 1800, seem to have been all settled.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, political confusion and attempts to secure freedom so entirely occupied the attention of the State that it was impossible to deal further with the gipsy problem. Attempts to settle the gipsies were made by private individuals. Bishop John Ham opened a gipsy school at Szatmar in 1857, and the priest Ferdinand Farkas founded an educational institution at Neuhausel; both experiments speedily came to an end. The efforts of the Serbian government to put an end to the wanderings of the Mohammedan tent gipsies ("gurbeti") were more successful between 1860 and 1870. Little effect was produced by the decree of the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior prohibiting vagrancy, issued on July 9, 1867. The Archduke Joseph, who was well acquainted with the nomadic gipsies, settled several families, but in less than ten years they had all deserted their new home. The gipsies have a kind of "residence" in Debreczin, formerly a pure Magyar town. A few years ago the Hungarian Government announced their intention of taking the work of settlement in hand with greater seriousness.

Numbers of gipsies settle down every year under the pressure of circumstances. Thus not only in Hungary, but also in the other countries of Europe, with the possible exception of Rumania, the number of gipsies is decreasing every year. About 1800, there were one hundred thousand gipsies in Scotland alone, while in 1895, there were only twelve thousand in the whole of the British Islands. In Prussia,

where they were left in comparative peace until the ordinance of 1872, there are hardly eleven thousand; noteworthy are the small colonies which have survived in Lorraine from the French period in the parishes of Barenthal, Wiesenthal, and Gotzenbruck. At the present day there may be about one million gipsies in Europe, and at least as many again in the other continents of the world.

*The figures mentioned above were recorded fifty years ago. **Now their number exceeds six million, as they are a very fertile people, like their brethren of India.***

## CHAPTER V

# MOST PERSECUTED RACE

**Black Record of Every Country—Prussian Persecution—Terror Placards—They Go Laughing to Gallows—A Scholar's Book Comes to Their Rescue—Forced into Caves in Spain—Britain's 'Vagabonds and Egyptians'—Reform Measures—Some Misguided Efforts—Humane Treatment and Encouragement Now.**

*'Kill them, Kill them all !' cried one.*
*Then another. 'Let them die';*
*Then I heard a third say, "Why?*
*What have the poor gipsies done?*
*I cry to God and say,*
*'Alas! how few we are'*
*We poor Kale'*

*Irving Brown*

* * *

*Suffering is a badge of honour.*

*—A gipsy proverb*

THE GIPSIES, like the Jews, have been persecuted through the centuries. It is for the historians to decide as to which of the two races is the more persecuted, but whatever I have heard and seen of the gipsies convinces me that they have fared even worse than the Jews at the hands of their tormentors. England, France, Germany, Austria, Spain—all have an equally sordid record in this matter.

In 1498 the Reichstag held at Speyer ordered the banishment of the gipsies as "traitors to all Christian countries". At Augsburg in 1500 a general order was issued forbidding anyone to allow the passage of gipsies through the countries

while all safe-conduct passes issued by princes were declared null and void.

A general persecution now began. Every possible method was tried to rid the country of them and what little they possessed was taken from them.

An edict of 1711 declared that if any gipsies were found in the country within eight days of its publication, they would become the property of the State, together with all their possessions, and that the men would be immediately shot and the women and children confined in the nearest prison.

At Dresden in the year 1556 two gipsies who had defied the ban were thrown into the Elbe river. Frederick William I published an edict in October, 1725, to the effect that all gipsies over eighteen should be hanged without respect to sex if found on Prussian soil.

The councillors of Aachen took rather similar measures in 1728 but included in their proclamation the proviso that gipsies who did not offer resistance (in which case they were to be shot immediately) should be allowed half an hour to pray to God on their knees for forgiveness of their sins, and to prepare themselves for death.

Prussian records from the time of Frederick I state that gallows had been erected at the frontiers and inscribed with the words 'For thieves and gipsies', but gipsies could not read them. Sometimes warning placards were erected which displayed clearly in bright colours the process of whipping and hanging so that gipsies might know what to expect if they crossed the borders of the state in question.

The museum of the ancient Free City of Nordlingen contains specimens of such warning placards. Their meaning is obvious even without the explanatory inscriptions underneath them. The first placard portrays a man, the flesh

of whose body has been torn to shreds by whipping, being driven to the gallows on which another gipsy is already hanging. The second placard portrays the flogging of a gipsy man and woman at tne foot of the gallows, on which a companion of their has expiated the crime of not being born a German. Underneath the second placard is the inscription:

"PUNISHMENT METED OUT TO GIPSIES AND THEIR WOMEN FOUND IN THE COUNTRY."

And yet the gipsies were happier than their persecutors. They could sing and dance with their ears cut off. They sang and laughed as they went to the gallows.

Gipsies found within Prussian jurisdiction were to be executed without delay, regardless of sex or age. And still gipsies came on and on, and some of them returned though mutilated, knowing that by doing so they courted death.

There were gipsy hunts in Germany until the first half of the nineteenth century. Things changed when Grellmann traced the origin of the gipsies to India. This gave them a certain degree of nobility in the eyes of the Germans. His book saved the lives of many gipsies in Germany and elsewhere, at least temporarily.

But in the Second World War, Hitler forgot all about the Aryan origin of the gipsies and had them killed by the thousands. In Bosnia alone 28,000 were killed, according to Dr. Rade Uhlik, the Yugoslav scholar. In the Ukraine and other States of the Soviet Union invaded by the Germans, thousand of gipsies were killed by the German army.

*Austria:* As late as the middle of the eighteenth century Austria too was severe in her measures against gipsies. On September 24, 1701, the Emperor Leopold declared them

outlaws. In 1726 Charles VI gave orders for all male gipsies to be put to death, while women and the youth under 18 were to have one ear cut off. In Bohemia it was the right, in Silesia and Mahren the left.

*Spain :* Spain was already engaged in persecuting the gipsies at the end of the fifteenth century. In 1492 many gipsies had to leave for North Africa or other parts of Europe but the majority stayed in out-of-the-way places, even hiding in caves when necessary, and thus avoiding the merciless persecutions of Ferdinand, Charles V and Philip II.

Even today the gipsies of Spain are not allowed to use their language, Romany.

*France :* In 1561 the Orleans Parliament decided to exterminate gipsies completely. The order was renewed in 1612 because the gipsies had multiplied in spite of the order to wipe them out.

Under Louis XIII and Louis XIV they were regularly massacred. There was a price on the head of every gipsy man and woman. Those gipsies who did not perish in prison were thrown into the holds of ships about to sail to the French colonies across the seas. Only in the Basque Province, where a few were able to flee in time, was their lot less hard. For this reason the majority of French gipsies are still to be found in the south of France. In 1802 some groups were removed to North Africa but there are nearly 30,000 to 50,000 of them still prospering in the south of France. I met a few thousands of them in May 1960, at the annual gathering described in a previous chapter.

*England :* At first England regarded the gipsies as pilgrims to whom alms had to be given. The 'Egyptians' were in a privileged position which made several non-gipsies join them. The gipsies were allowed to hunt, they had the right of trial in case of fraternal affairs (also in Scotland) and in

case of a crime committed against a non-gipsy they were allowed a jury composed of one half gipsies and the other half non-gipsies.

Early in the sixteenth century, however, the first anti-gipsy laws were promulgated. In 1530, under the reign of Henry VIII, an act was passed by which no gipsies ('Egyptians') were allowed to enter England. Those who were already in the country had to leave it within sixteen days. If they nevertheless re-entered or remained in the country, all their goods and possessions were taken from them and divided equally between the crown and those who had seized the gipsies and their goods. Furthermore, crimes committed by gipsies against inhabitants were judged by a full English jury. In 1535, a gipsy or a vagrant who was captured for the first time was flogged and obliged to swear to return to his birth-place or to a place where he had stayed previously for three years; if he was caught a second time he was deprived of the upper part of his right ear; a third arrest was punished with death. In 1537 Thomas Cromwell, Lord Privy Seal, wrote that all gipsies had to be banished or executed. And in the following years until the seventeenth century, many gipsy expulsions (for example to Norway) and cases where passports were given to gipsies to leave are recorded. On the whole, however, it appears that these acts and measures were not everywhere fully applied and contradictory references are to be noted, as for example, the probability that in 1540-41 some gipsies performed before Henry VIII at Canterbury.

In 1555, under the reign of Philip and Mary, the laws against gipsies were tightened up. All passports and licences in their possession were declared invalid. All gipsies had to leave the country within twenty days. Those gipsies who were found after had to pay a fine of £ 40 and those who stayed more than a month were declared felons punishable

by death. From the exceptions which were made to this law it may be seen, however, that it was not directed against the gipsies for being gipsies but to a great extent against their gipsy ways, occupations and trades, for all were excepted who would give up "that naughty, idle and ungodly life and company and be placed in the service of some honest and able inhabitants or honestly exercise himself in some lawful work or occupation". Children under thirteen years of age were also exempted.

In 1562, in the reign of Elizabeth, this law was repeated in 'An Act for Further Punishment of Vagabonds Calling Themselves Egyptians'. Moreover, counterfeit gipsies, that is to say, persons who imitated the gipsies, their speech, outward appearance, etc. were included. Those persons who associated with gipsies for more than a month at a time or in several periods were declared felons and obliged to suffer death, loss of lands and goods, etc. Exceptions were made for the officials who were obliged to be together with the gipsies to direct them home to their place of birth where they were allowed to ply an honest trade. The death sentence against the gipsies was not often carried out; instead the gipsies were banished. During the following years, more searches for gipsies were made. On the whole, the measures were directed against the idle persons, rogues, vagabonds, and 'Egyptians' who had no honest trade—palmistry, fortune-telling, mysterious sciences, etc. being considered unlawful.

*Scotland :* During the sixteenth century, the gipsies in Scotland were largely allowed to direct their own affairs. They possessed a right to trial and execute their own offenders. There is a belief that the gipsies came to have a non-gipsy chief—John Wann, Fall or Faw, who ruled over the gipsies in 1540. He is mentioned in a document described in

the *Register of the Privy Seal* (Vol. XIII, fol. 83), but nothing more definite is known about him.

During the sixteenth century, gipsies were in favour with the kings of Scotland. James V is known to have associated with gipsies and it has been recorded that they danced before him in 1530. After a short period during which they were out of favour and obliged to leave the country, they were again in favour, this time with Queen Mary.

During the regency, in 1573, the gipsies were condemned as murderers, thieves, witches, etc., and their execution was demanded. By a 'charge upon the Egyptians' issued the same year by the Privy Council of Scotland the gipsies had to choose between sedentary work and expulsion. This measure was reinforced the next year by an 'Act for the staunching of masterful idle beggers away, putting of sorcerers, and provision for the poor' in which the gipsies were especially mentioned. This act was directed against unlawful plays, palmistry, fortune-telling, etc. Severe punishment could be evaded only if an honest person took the offender into his service. If the transgressor quitted this service before a year had passed he suffered punishment and was then free for a period of 60 days to leave the country failing which he would be executed. Children under 14 years of age would come into slavery if their parents did not settle down. These measures to force the gipsies to take to an honest, sedentary trade failed and they were badly enforced as it may be seen in 1576, when it was ordained that gipsies were to be brought to justice and that an official who did not execute this order was to be punished himself.

In 1592, a search for vagrants, rebels and traitors was instituted and such persons were obliged to settle down or to be expelled. By an Act of Parliament under the reign of James VI in 1597 (repeated in 1599 and 1600) 'strong

beggars, vagabonds, Egyptians' were to be punished with penal servitude for life.

All letters of protection and licences in favour of the gipsies were cancelled (1603, 1609). By an Act of 1609 (repeated in 1619) it was forbidden to harbour and to give shelter to gipsies, and in 1612 the right of the gipsies to manage their own affairs was revoked. A few years later it was declared to be unlawful, on pain of death, for a gipsy to be found in the country. In 1627, it was ordained that all gipsies were to be arrested and forced to become soldiers in the army which was to be sent out to aid the King of Denmark. In 1665, the gipsies were to be banished to the West Indies. Many gipsies fled to Ireland, however, and others organised themselves in bands and became a menace to travellers. Furthermore, the laws and measures directed against the gipsies and other vagarants were never fully applied and thus it can be explained that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gipsies were to be found living in Scotland in no unfavourable conditions.

In England also anti-gipsy measures had little success. In the constables' accounts and other town records of the seventeenth century sums paid to the gipsies to leave or for watching over them have been noted on several occasions. During that period and the following centuries highway robberies were often ascribed to gipsies but this accusation was rarely true, although they occasionally committed serious crimes, and professional thieves and criminals were to be found among them. But gipsies proved to have committed crime were severely punished. For example cattle-stealing and burglary were penalised with death (1783, 1802, 1822). By an Act of 1882, all persons pretending to be gipsies or to tell fortunes or wandering abroad or lodging under tents or in carts were to be deemed rogues and vagabonds. Furthermore, "any gipsy encamping on the side of a turnpike road

was liable to a penalty of 40 shillings". A few years later it was promulgated that anyone wandering without visible means of subsistence and anyone ptetending to tell fortunes by palmistry or otherwise to deceive "was liable for the first offence to three months' imprisonment". Thereafter, the gipsies were not especially named any more, except in the above-mentioned ordinance on encampments and the Highway Act of 1835 by which a gipsy "pitching a tent or encamping upon a highway" is liable to be fined 40 shillings.

During the ninetenth century, gipsy societies were founded in England with the aim of reforming the gipsies by education of their children and settlement of the elders. These societies, founded in England by Crabb (1827) and in Scotland by Baird (1838) were followed by many other attempts which all had only outward success, the gipsies falling in when they could gain some advantage by it.

Sweden, Norway and Denmark, all took severe measures against gipsies and continued to do so until the eighteenth century. There is no country in Western and Central Europe which has not tried to get rid of gipsies. None, however, has succeeded.

Today the legislation in Great Britain that would affect the gipsies consists of the Children's Act of 1908 by which vagrants who prevent their children from receiving an education are penalised, and the 'Movable Dwellings Bill' (1909) which stipulates that tents, vans, carts, etc., are to be registered and regulated, that the children living in such 'movable dwellings' are to be sent to school, and that some specified hygienic conditions must be fulfilled.

The first friendly attempt to help gipsies merge in the European society was made in 1761 by Maria Theresa, who renamed them New Hungarians or new peasants and forbade them their open-air life. To accustom them to European

ways the men were conscripted for military service. Five years later someone had the bright idea of quickly civilising them by taking away gipsy children to be brought up by Hungarian farmers, but the method failed because they failed to create the mutual goodwill which was necessary on both sides.

Emperor Joseph II refuted the accusation of cannibalism which was being made against the gipsies. But there was a great uproar when gipsies had their children taken from them and dragged by ropes to school.

A more successful attempt at settling them was in 1890 by the Hapsburg prince, Archduke Joseph (already referred to) when he offered one of his estates as a sanctuary where they could live as they chose, but after his death the experiment came to an end.

An attempt was made in Prussia to achieve by the creation of gipsy settlements what others had tried to do by compulsion. Attempts were made to set up gipsy colonies but they failed.

The greatest success at rehabilitation of gipsies was achieved by Catherine II of Russia who settled them on the crown lands.

While conditions everywhere have improved and humane treatment is being given to gipsies, in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe today they are receiving special encouragement. The States are giving liberal scholarships for the education of their children and offering them employment on land and in factories. I visited several gipsy schools in Europe and the children entertained me everywhere with dances and songs—some from Indian films.

Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria have in recent years performed an admirable job in rehabilitating the gipsies by putting them to work in factories and making

them join the co-operatives on the land. In Yugoslavia also the government is spending considerable sums of money to educate and help the gipsies become happy citizens. Sweden and Finland are similarly doing a commendable job.

## CHAPTER VI

# MASTERS OF IMMORTAL MUSIC

Music their Only Friend—Musicians From India—Gipsies' Four Homes—Influence on Spanish Music—Important Place For Rhythm—Beethoven and Liszt Benefited—Intensity Is the First Concern—Bihari and the Emperor—Gujarati Song in New York—Ancient Indian Raga—Two Tragic Songs.

*Music has been cultivated uninterruptedly in India for many centuries. It has been said by a good authority that it is perhaps "the most highly cultivated of Indian arts". We in the West have much to learn from it.*

*Irving Brown :* DEEP SONG, *P. 124*

*I have known no father since my birth,*
*I have no friend alive on Earth,*
*My mother is dead since many days,*
*The girl I loved has gone her way,*
*Thou, violin, with music free,*
*Alone art ever true to me.*

*Transylvanian gipsy song*

IRVING BROWN has written about the music that the gipsies took from India.[1]

He says: "A Romany is ultra-conservative, with a passion for everything Romany. After a separation of some thousand years from their fellows in India, there are tribes of gipsies in various parts of the world—Wales, Turkey, America—whose vocabulary is largely East Indian; and the form of these words is, on the whole, more archaic and

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[1] *Deep Song* by Irving Brown

closer to Sanskrit than the corresponding forms used today in India.

"It has sometimes been stated that they brought with them from the land of their origin neither songs nor dances. All the evidence is to the contrary. An early mention of the gipsies is the legend that they were the descendants of twelve thousand male and female Indian minstrels, imported for the entertainment of the people by Bahram Gur, the great Hunter of Omar's *Rubaiyat*. It is related by an Arab historian in Persian about A.D. 950, and later by the poet Firdausi, in the *Shahnama*. It is merely a legend, but it shows at least that singing and dancing were among the chief professions of the Romanies in Persia at that time as they are today in the East.

"Also, there are early documents referring to the musical tendencies of the gipsies in Europe. In Scotland they danced for King James in Holyrood Palace. In France, they danced at the court of the youthful Louis XIII, in spite of an edict forbidding them the realm. In the Second interlude of *Le Malade Imaginaire*, Moliere speaks of 'Egyptians dressed like Moors, who mingle songs with dances.' He is obviously referring to gipsies, for elsewhere in his works Moliere calls them Egyptians. At the end of the song are the words: 'The Moors and the monkeys they have brought with them all dance together, skipping about.'

"Before entering western Europe, the gipsies wandered for a long time in the Balkans, and many, perhaps the majority, continue to do so today. From Bucharest to Budapest, the words gipsy and musicians are practically synonymous.

"The outstanding feature of gipsy life is nomadism. The typical Romany means of gaining a living are nomadic, and one of the chief nomadic pursuits is that of the artist.

"The term 'Bohemian' popularised by Murger in *La Vie de Boheme,* comes from the French words for gipsy, extended to cover the gipsy-like lives of youthful groups of poets, painters and musicians. Liszt compared himself to a gipsy because of his continual wanderings."

Irving Brown continues: "He does not love money for its own sake, but as a testimony of his skill or cunning; and he hastens to spend it on some pleasurable object. I once heard a Gitano song:

Bente con mangue y beras,
La grasia que hay que tener
Pa bibir sin currelar !

(If you do not want to work,
Come with me and you shall see
How amusing we can be !)

The gipsy and the artist are never poor, however. There is a *malaguena* that goes as follows :

Me has despreciado por pobre
Y cuatro palacios tengo:
El Asilio, el Hospital,
La Carcel y el cementerio.

(I have four great palaces.
Though you call me, 'Beggar, knave'
I've the hospital, the prison,
The cathedral, and the grave.)

'I thought of this song one day as I watched some Gitanos, laughing, singing, and begging in front of the great cathedral in Seville. I thought also of the poet, Paul Verlaine, author of *My Prisons,* of *My Hospitals,* and some of the most exquisite of modern lyrics.

"When the gipsies left India about a thousand years ago, they wandered through Persia, Armenia, Turkey, and the Balkan Peninsula into Greece, where they probably remained

as a body for two hundred or more years, before spreading in various directions throughout the rest of Europe at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The music which this race of minstrel brought from the East and Near East must have been essentially Oriental.

"In most of the countries of Europe their performances would have scarcely been appreciated. Today there are still a certain number of gipsy musicians in France and Great Britain, for instance; but their music does not differ on the whole from that of the country.

"In Spain the situation was wholly different. For eight centuries the southern part of the Peninsula was under Moorish domination, during which time Arabic civilisation reached its height. This civilisation was also the produce of indigenous influence.

"The gipsies arrived in Spain nearly half a century before the expulsion of the Moors and the Jews. That the Oriental type of music and dancing of the Romanies should have been appreciated by the inhabitants is only natural. The same thing happened elsewhere. In Russia, in the Balkans, and in Hungary, countries where contact with Orientals has been closest, gipsy music and dances have survived.

"There was another result. Hispano-Arabic music must have been similar enough to their own to enable them to master it quickly. Two characteristics of the Romany which seem contradictory, but which exist side by side in his make-up to a remarkable degree, are his conservatism and his adaptability. He retains his racial integrity everywhere, yet everywhere he makes himself at home.

"In all probability the gipsy in Andalusia, while preserving something of his earlier forms of music and dancing, also helped to modify the main current of Hispano-Arabic songs.

"Later came other influences, chiefly from the Spanish

colonies. the music of Cuban and Argentine Negroes and that of Peruvian and Mexican Indians, for instance. Nor should one forget the influence of church music, especially the Byzantine, on Spanish folk song from early times down to the present day. Even the vogue of Italian opera in the eighteenth and ninetenth centuries left its mark.

"Though the gipsies in Spain borrowed from many sources in the formation of their folk arts, they remained true to their origin and took what was theirs where they found it. Though *cante gitano* was not brought bodily from India by the Romanies, it illustrates their tendency to revert to type. Let us note how many fundamental similarities there are between the music dances of the Spanish gipsies and those of the East Indians of today.

"In the matter for pure rhythm, I believe the Spanish gipsies have few equals. In as simple a thing as the hand-clapping which accompanies a song or dance, there are individuals who attain a complexity and variety of rhythms that are astonishing.

"It is my firm conviction that Beethoven learned something from the complex and swiftly changing rhythms of the Hungarian gipsies in Vienna; and Liszt has admitted his indebtedness in no uncertain terms. Recently I was told that Dalcroze invited a Hungarian gipsy Cembalom player to play for his pupils, and expressed his deep admiration of the rhythmic beauty of the music. Dalcroze is admittedly an authority in the matter.

"Of course the gipsies are not unique in this respect. Several 'primitive' peoples have a better sense of rhythm than our own. For instance, the Negroes of Africa can distinguish and use many more rhythms than those of America, who have gained wide recognition for their rhythmic sense. There has been a definite decline through contact with our

own music, which, in this regard, is really the more 'primitive', in the sense of more rudimentary.

"The explanation is simple. It is difficult to make progress along many lines at the same time. Concentration on certain phases of development is apt to involve neglect or retrogression in others. The amazing beauty of harmony and tone colour in the modern symphony has not been attained without a long evolution involving certain sacrifices.

"In Hindu music, as in Spanish gipsy music, there is a luxuriance of cross-rhythms, a freedom, a richness, fluidity, and multiplicity of rhythms that we should envy; whereas harmony has been much neglected. For this reason, in India, drums play a highly important role in accompanying a singer. A good Hindu drummer is as much a virtuoso as a good European violinist, and is capable of producing extremely difficult and delicate effects on his instrument.

"Among the Turkish gipsies a pair of small kettledrums. fastened together with a thong and slung over one knee, are often the only accompaniment of a song and dance. In Spain, as in some other countries, the Romanies use the tambourine, though it is going out of vogue. Many singers of Flamenco have what is called a 'style stick,' a short rod with which they drum against the rung of the chair on which they are seated, marking the fluctuating rhythms of each style of sound. Others use a cane, which they tap against the floor; or if seated at a table, they drum on it with their fingers.

"Whether or not the gipsy dispenses with instruments of percussion, his skill remains constant. He snaps his fingers, which he prefers to castanets, and stamps his heels while seated on the edge of his chair. For mastery in this mode of drumming, my friend, Manolo a Rosa, is in great demand for *cuadros flamencos.* Still others use their entire bodies,

tapping here and there as they dance, producing resonances in highly involved syncopations. Watching the gipsy, Carmen Granados, in such a dance, Raoul Laparra, the French composer, remarked enthusiastically, "C'est une fille sonore!" (The girl is positively sonorous !)

'If harmony more or less appeals to the intellect, rhythm appeals directly and powerfully to the emotions.

"The question of melody is difficult and leaves room for differences of opinion. There are many similarities between Hindu and gipsy melodies; but they are easier to perceive than to explain.

"Many of the Russian gipsy romances are the work of popular song writers; but there are a few genuine Russian gipsy songs. Some of these are entirely in Romany and are seldom sung to outsiders. The melody of one of these—*Dohane yone man, tire kaye yakha* (Your Dark Eyes Consume Me)—has been collected and published by Mr. Gilliat Smith in the *Journal of the Gipsy Lore Society*. It is decidedly Hindu in flavour. I was told recently that de Falla, after hearing a large collection of Hindu songs, was struck by their resemblance to those of the Spanish gipsies. 'Why, that might almost be Indian!' Ragini, the musician and dancer, exclaimed, hearing a record of *cante flamenco*. It is difficult as a rule, for Orientals and Occidentals to appreciate each others' melodies; they are so different. Which are developed more highly, it is hard to say. In Hindu and gipsy music, the melodic themes are more fluid and complex than ours. Those who are unfamiliar with *cante gitano*, therefore, must listen to a given song, time and time again, in order to master the tune. Their melodies are elusive, delicate and subtle.

"One of the characteristics of Oriental melody is the tendency to end on a falling cadence. With us the voice is

more apt to rise. The former is more expressive of melancholy, and is also more natural; but it would be as foolish to argue which is better as to argue the merits of the happy and unhappy endings for literature as a whole. Nevertheless, one must admit that the greater poignancy of sorrow makes it a better vehicle for the expression of any feeling, even that of joy.

"Another trait is the use of microtones, such as quarter and third tones, which to us sound off-key. In reality, it is a question of using different scales and of training the ear to finer shadings. This is one reason why it is impossible adequately to transcribe a Spanish gipsy folk song or an Indian air by our system of notation, and to play them on European instruments with fixed keys.

"Grace notes, and the use of the flowing glide, producing what the Hindu calls 'curves of sound', are essential matters to the gipsy as well as to the East Indian. Instead of skipping about here and there, the melody seems to flow like water in a river, rising and falling in rapids, halting in still pools, and dashing over falls. I remember watching a gipsy with a heavy pack on his back, who stood for a long time in front of a cafe near the Triana bridge in Seville, listening eagerly to *cante flamenco* on a phonograph. When a European popular song was played he turned away in disgust, muttering to himself, 'It goes up and down too much. He meant that it sounded jerky.

"To most Europeans, on the other hand, Oriental music sounds 'monotonous'. It is because they fail to seize the intricate melody and miss the bobbing up and down the scale every few notes. Also, of course, they miss a harmonised accompaniment.

"Even in the orchestral music of the gipsies, harmony and counterpoint play a slight role compared with rhythm

and melody. Liszt has stated that in the Hungarian gipsy orchestra the violin is really a solo instrument. 'The rest merely intensify its shadows and illumine its joys. Each musician sustains the motif, reinforcing its sonorities, accentuating its rhythms, seizing the thought of the solo virtuoso on the bound, as it falls from starry flights.'

"Gipsy music, like all the music of the Orient, has developed the art of embellishment to a high degree. Fioritura in Western art is usually unessential adornment; but the arabesques and virtuosities, characteristic of much of gipsy song, provide an outlet for the overflow of feeling. The difference between technical display and genuine emotion is like the difference between pyrotechnics and the rockets and shells fired in a battle. What Mitjans say of the Spanish people is even truer of the gipsies: they prefer emotion to pleasure. '...power of expression, intense animation and warmth of feeling are the outstanding characteristics of Spanish song.'

"Another parallel between Hindu and Romany music is the relative indifference to the quality of the tone. It is not that clearness and sweetness of tone is not appreciated—in its place—but the place is subordinate one. Throughout the Orient a nasal tone is cultivated deliberately for certain types of song. For these the Arab g'haita or the Indian snake-horn, the notes of which are not unlike those of the oboe, are considered superior to those of the sugary flute. One is reminded of the contempt of painters for painting that is 'too sweet'. The voice of one of the greatest of contemporary gipsy singers is positively hoarse. No one minds particularly, for it is expressive. Animation, intensity and warmth of feeling are the chief concern of his admirers.

"The Occident has carried matters to the other extreme. It is time a reaction set in. Most of our teachers of singing

are mere tone producers and forget that the voice is merely a means, not an end in itself. Most concert-goers comment solely on the loveliness or lack of loveliness in the singer's high, low and middle notes. Is it any wonder that the singer scarcely thinks of his song, or of what it should express ?

"Music has been cultivated uninterruptedly in India for many centuries. It has been said by good authority that it is perhaps 'the most highly cultivated of Indian arts.' We in the West have much to learn from it.

"There is good, bad and indifferent gipsy music; but before one can judge it or enjoy it, one must learn the musical idiom in which it is composed. One does not expect to pass judgement on a poem in a foreign tongue unless one is acquainted with that tongue, and the system of metrics in which it is written; and music is a language of the emotions, older even than speech, a language that has many branches and many forms of beauty."

In 1825 a gipsy called Bihari was called to Vienna to appear before the Emperor. The vivacity of the gipsy eyes and the great charm of the man were such the noblest ladies of the court strove to gain his favour. When one day Bihari had played for the Emperor, the Emperor asked him to express some desire. "Whatever you wish will be given to you...even a title of nobility. Do you want a letter of nobility?" But Bihari, a true gipsy, generous, and with no idea of limitations, asked for a letter of nobility for his whole band. No gipsy could own something which the others did not have. Bihari smiled at the Emperor's confusion. Marie Louise, a princess of Italy and the Czarina of Russia were among the women he had fascinated by his playing. The Empress asked Bihari to present his wife to her and then begged him not to look with such insistence into the eyes of

the princesses, for his own wife was more beautiful than any other woman.

As generous with his money as he was with his heart, distributing what he earned to the people in need, Bihari died in great poverty. He never looked at notes, did not even know how to read music, still he played the works of great composers. One hearing was enough for him to play what he had heard and to play it better and with richer colour.

Mr. Dave who comes from Gujarat and has lived in the United States for over two decades told me that American gipsies were still singing songs of Gujarat which he could easily understand. The Director of the New York Public Library deputed a few research assistants to write down some particular gipsy songs (which Mr. Dave had mentioned) and here I reproduce them from *Deep Song* by Irving Brown;

Mar Man Devla, Mar Man,
Samo Na Mudara man
Devla Tu men Mudarya,
Misto nai Keresa.

Strike me, Devla, strike me,
Only don't strike me dead,
Devla, if you kill me Devla,
Then my blood is on your head.
(Devla--God)

Te merava te merava,
Nai so te Kerava,
Kana me merava, Devla,
Kon man rovlariela ?

I could wish that I were dying,
What will ever become of me ?
When I lie a-dying, Devla,
Who will mourn me bitterly ?

"There is something Slavic and liturgical in this song; but there is also something of Indian Kalyan Rag," says Irving Brown. He did not know it was a Gujarati song brought by ancestors of gipsies to the United States of America.

Here is another song:

Dohane Jone man tire kale takha,
Save gozo Jone dryvan lave jore
Ai myon, hasian
Ai da mire kalo sero.
Your eyes devour my soul,
devour my soul with care.
How beautiful they are !
Your dark eyes, oh, how fair ?
Alas I am almost dead,
Alas my poor dark head !

Says Ragini: This is reminiscent of a very ancient Indian Raga, the Malkaunsa, one of six prime Ragas. It is associated with tragedy and death.

And another typical Romany:

Nai tu dad, nai tu dei
Nai tu Pral, Nai tu Pei,
Nai tu Konik Kalar lendar,
You have no father, you have no mother,
You have no brother, you have no sister,
You have no one of your own.
I must leave you all alone.

Yet another gipsy song, which is from Transylvania:

Na Janav Ke dad miro as,
Niko Mallen Mange as,
Miro Gule dai Merdyas
Pirani ne pregelyas
Uva tu O hegedive
In sal mindik pash mange.

I have known no father since my birth,
I have no friend above on earth,
My mother is dead these many days,
The girl I loved has gone her way,
Thou, violin, with music free,
Alone art ever true to me.

## Chapter VII

# GIPSIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE

### By Professor J. Verkardi

Hindi-Romany Relation— First Discovery by Accident—Hungarian Student Pioneer—Gipsy A Misnomer—"Origins from India"—Scholars' Scientific Verdict—Half Hindi Vocabulary—Long Stay in Greece—Waves of Migration—Two Main Types—Lazy and Talented —Great Musicians—Proud of Indian Parents—Scientific Surveys—Homes for Gipsies.

It was long ago—as early as in the last decades of the eighteenth century—that a Hungarian student travelling in Germany met there some young Indian people. When listening to their conversation, he was aware that certain Indian words were very similar to the idioms used by the Hungarian gipsies he knew well. He started to ask some words, the names of the numbers, the most simple expressions and on this ground he maintained that a certain affinity existed between the Indian and the gipsy languages, consequently, between the two nations.

This was perhaps the first discovery of the kinship between these nations divided by thousands of miles. Before this time all European scholars thought that the gipsies are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians. This pseudo-scientific doctrine became widespread even among the gipsies who spoke about themselves as the "people of the Pharaoh" and, when seeing that this story was accepted in Europe, they built up a series of legends about their Egyptian origin. Not long ago, an old gipsy man told me a story according to which the gipsies lived in Egypt and at the time of the great murder of the children by King Herod they gave refuge to Jesus Christ, after which the infuriated King expelled

them from the country; since that time, the old man said, gipsies and Jews had been brothers and suffered the same fate. In fact during the Second World War, the Nazis tried to extirpate them together. Of course, such legends have no historical value and they even do not belong to any ancient mythological tradition; they are mostly the mere products of the story-teller's phantasy; for the phantasy of the gipsies is admirably rich, richer than that of many European nations.

At the middle of the last century German scholars entirely dissipated the belief in the Egyptian origin. First A. Pott, the well-known indologist, then the Czech Fr. Miklosich with an abundant philological apparatus demonstrated that the gipsies can take their origin only from India. There are plenty of similar words in gipsy and Sanskrit or modern Indian dialects, especially in Punjabi. The identity of the basic linguistic stock attests the migration of the gypsies from India. A large number of words are nearly identical, *e.g.*: Gipsy *ek, jek*: Sanskrit *eka,* Hindi *ek,* 'one'; G. *manush*: S. *manushya,* 'man'; G. *phral*: S. *bhrata';* Hindi *bhai,* 'brother'; G. *panyi payi*: Hindi *pani,* 'water'; *G. lel*: H. *lena,* 'to take'; G. *del*: H. *dena,* 'to give'; G *devla, del*: S. *deva,* H. *deo.* 'God'. This list could be continued *ad infinitum.* But the examples given belong to the most fundamental words of the language, the common expressions of the everyday life, such as numbers (curiously, only from 1 to 6, then from 10 on), family relationships, the parts of the body, meteorological phenomena, simple foods, animals, then the most usual adjectives and verbs as *puro,* 'old', *purano,* 'ancient' (cf. Sanskrit purana), *baro,* 'great' (cf. Hindi *bara*), *jivel,* 'to live' (cf. S. *jiv*), *khal, hal,* 'to eat' (cf. S. *khad,*—H. *khana*), etc.

But we must not be mistaken by the great similarity of the words given above. In spite of the correspondences the differences too are so great that a Hindi-speaking Indian

can hardly understand any word when gipsies speak continuously and rapidly. Statistically speaking, about half of the sum of gipsy words is of Indian origin, more or less transformed; the other half was taken over by the gipsies from other languages during their long wanderings through Asia and Europe. Even these loan words enable us to trace back the way the gipsies have gone. Starting from the northwestern provinces of India about the seventh century they travelled through Persia and Turkey; here they were divided into different groups, some of them went into Armenia, others into Egypt, but the bulk continued their way towards Europe, to Greece on the Balkan peninsula.

In Greece they must have stayed for a long while because their language has undergone a strong Greek influence. Then, perhaps driven by the Turkish expansion on the Balkan peninsula they wandered towards North, through some areas of Slavonic settlement and, in the first decades of the fifteenth century, they arrived in Hungary. Entering Hungary, at the same time they entered history. For it is only from this time that we have historical records about the gipsies.

From Hungary, they spread throughout Europe in a very short time. At first, if we may trust the contemporary historiographs, they were treated with kindness for they pretended to be a Christian nation persecuted by the Mohammedanian Turks. The favourable opinion, however, soon changed to a worse one and through centuries, even to-day, the gipsies have suffered a public disregard.

The migration of the gipsies did not occur at once. A series of waves followed each other. These waves consisted of small units: a family or, maximally, a clan wandering together. Gipsy migrations cannot be said to have ended even now, when in Europe every other nation has settled

down long ago. Travelling in Czechoslovakia, we often hear gipsies speak Hungarian. They immigrated from the neighbouring Hungary after World War II, for the Czechoslovakian gipsies were extirpated by the Germans during the war. Nobody knows how they can wander from one country to the other now, when frontiers are so strongly defined and guarded, but they do it.

In Hungary, the different waves of immigration resulted in a stratification of at least two main types of gipsies, different in origin, language, complexion and customs. Of these two strata, no doubt, the "Hungarian gipsies" *par excellence* are the group living in Hungary over a longer time; the so-called "Warrachian gipsies" (Rumanian gipsies) immigrated later. Besides the time, the manner of their migration was different as well : the "Hungarian gipsies" came immediately from Slavonic lands of the Balkan peninsula (Yugoslavia) and their language remained in this way more archaic, free from Rumanian elements (indeed, full of Slavonic words) while the "Wallachian gipsies" having left the Slavonic area, spent a long time in Rumania before arriving in Hungary; therefore in the Wallachian gipsy dialect many archaic words are replaced by corresponding Rumanian terms, *e.g.* Hungarian gipsy *jivel,* 'he lives', Wallachian gipsy *trayi* (a Rumanian word with the same meaning).

This linguistic stratification enable an interesting conclusion in the field of criminal history. The slang of the Hungarian jails consists mostly of gipsy words because in the "society" of common-law prisoners gipsies are represented by a very high percentage of thieves and robbers. (They are not to be found among the political prisoners). Nowadays, we find in the jails almost exclusively Wallachian gipsies, partly because this stratum is the more primitive one, partly because the "Hungarian gipsies" begin to forget their mother tongue,

**An outdoor gipsy oven from Central Furope looking very much like a Punjabi 'tandoor'**

**A procession at Stes. Marie de la Mer in Southern France where a gathering of gipsies from all over the world is held annually. The author attended the fair in 1960.**

A gipsy family o
Sweden living in
wagon

Gipsy mother an
child from Sweden
They are a ten
dwelling family.

**A Swiss gipsy girl**

An American gipsy.
An early photograph.

An American gipsy of
Hungarian origin

preferring speaking Hungarian, so it is more difficult to distinguish them from non-gipsy elements. In spite of this situation, no Wallachian gipsy word occurs in the slang of the jails. This fact shows that in the period when this slang emerged—the second half of the last century—the proportion of the two groups was the opposite of what it is now. In fact, some other indicators serve to corroborate this assumption. For one thing, the parents of the present generation of "Hungarian gipsies" were not yet Hungarised; for another, the number of Wallachian gipsy immigrants increased only in this century.

The difference between the lite of the two groups is considerable. The overwhelming number of the "Hungarian gipsies" live by music; they provide the music of cafes, restaurants and taverns. They are well known abroad as well under the name of "tzigans". This profession is so closely connected with the group of the "Hungarian gipsies" that the group is often called "musician gipsies". Their civilised profession gives them the opportunity to occupy an indisputably higher place on the social scale. Illiteracy is not so great among them as among the Wallachian gipsies, housing and vestment is better, and they speak scornfully about the Wallachian people. These latter are certainly less advanced; but just because of it they have conserved more of the ancient customs, rites and views. The greater part of them lives in villages by occasional jobs. They never become peasants and abhor every agricultural or hard physical labour. The most popular profession, ensuring the highest income, among them is horse-selling; another substratum makes a living from carpet-making and selling. The women are fortune-tellers.

The gipsies are very lazy, but at the same time very talented. Clear, shrewd and endowed with rich phantasy—that is what every gipsy is. Their phantasy is a typical Oriental one, going far beyond the limits of reality. This can be

seen in all parts of their cultural life. Their tales are full of marvellous elements characteristic of Indian and Arabian fairy tales; in their songs and ballads a quite realistic hero unexpectedly faces supernatural events and cruel, inhuman situations; their habiliments are characterised by preference to shrill colours and rich ornaments; in their regional life they give place to every kind of mystical, but at the same time very often deeply realistic, superstitions. This mixture of phantasy and reality is one of the most characteristic features of their way of thinking, and, it can be said, of their every-day life, their morals and their habits.

Not only the "Hungarian (musician) gipsies", but Wallachian gipsies, too, are gifted musicians. They play very well on different musical instruments, but when they are among themselves, they like to return to their genuine form of music: singing without instrumental accompaniment. The accompaniment is then replaced by clapping of hands, beating the ground with the feet and the wall with the palms, or making different rhythmical noises with the mouth. In this manner they provide a splendid accompaniment to the songs. Some years ago their music gave rise to a sharp debate about the genuineness of the melodies. In the introduction to a collection of gipsy folk songs the editor maintained that the greater part of the melodies were only variants of Hungarian folk songs altered in gipsy manner. Some other scholars were of a different opinion, demonstrating that, although the effect of Hungarian melodies on the gipsy songs was really very great, nevertheless gipsy melodies showed a number of features different from the music of the surrounding people. It is difficult to decide which elements were brought by them from India or which specialities are the product of an independent gipsy musical style developed by them during their wanderings. A false opinion must be refuted: the genuine gipsy folk songs have nothing

in common with the music of the so-called "tzigans".

However, the ancient, peculiarly gipsy songs are characterised by a smaller number of melodies and texts than the translation and transformation of Hungarian songs. The gipsies are far from being conservative. They learn everything that is new very soon and similarly forget the old soon. The gipsies in Hungary know practically nothing about their ancestors. They know only where each of them was born or, perhaps, from which country their father came, but nothing further; they have no familial or tribal traditions. But as in India people were not and are not historical-minded, so too the gipsies. Lacking in such traditions, the gipsies did not know till recently that they came from India. However, after they have learnt from the scientific investigation that they are closely related to Indian people, they are very proud of this consanguinity evident even for non-specialists by the obvious identity of racial and linguistic features. When they see Indian films they often state with satisfaction that many words are understood by them, and as a result of my surveys among them I am always asked by them about the similarity of the "Hindu" language and theirs.

After the Second World War serious efforts were made by the Government to settle the "gipsy problem". As it is compulsory for other strata of the population to have a constant place of job so the police tries to enforce upon the half-vagabond elements of the gipsies the same manner of life. Much has already been done on this line and we hope that the efforts of the Government will meet with further successes.

Budapest May 5, 1959.

# Chapter VIII

# THE GIPSIES IN HUNGARY

By Professor J. Harmatta

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History of Gipsy Research—Valyi First Pioneer—First Gipsy Dictionary—They Had a Thakur—Chief of Panchayat—Special Hungarian Officers—Gipsy Phonetic System—Romany Grammar—Nouns and Pronouns—Conjugation of Verbs—Hindi and Romany—Names of Parts of Body—Family and Relations—Birds and Animals—Food, Tools and Products.

## I. The History of Gipsy Research in Hungary

In Hungary interest was shown early in the language and origin of the gipsies. The first attempt of scientific value to clarify the origin of the gipsy language was made by I. Valyi, who was a Calvinist priest at village Almas, in Komarom country. Valyi studied at the University of Leyden, the Netherlands, around the year 1750, and there he got acquainted with three Indian students. He found their language to be similar to that of the gipsies in Hungary and therefore he noted down more than one thousand words of their language. After returning to Hungary he read this list of words to the gipsies of Gyor, a town in Hungary, and these could tell him the meanings of almost all the words listed. Thus Valyi was the first to prove the Indian origin of the gipsy language and the gipsies. His discovery preceded by several decades the work of Grellmann, who is generally regarded as the discoverer of the Indian origin of the gipsies. The value of Valyi's discovery has been increased by the fact that it was made quite a number of years

before the publication of the work of Coeurdoux (1767) and also the lecture of William Jones, held at the Calcutta Society (1786), both of whom were the first to point out the affinity of Sanskrit with the European languages.

On the basis of the discovery of Valyi at the end of the eighteenth century, attention was more and more directed to the gipsy language in Hungary. About the year 1790 M. Pap Szathmari, Professor of Theology at Kolozsvar (Transylvania), prepared the first Gipsy-Latin-Hungarian dictionary entitled "Vocabularium Zingarico-Latinum et Hungaricum". This publication of the Hungarian Society of Linguistics issued in 1796, stressing the importance of comparison of languages in establishing the affinity of nations, directly led to the scientific study of the gipsy language. The first gipsy grammars were the result of the more profound study of this language. The most significant of these works was written by J. Koritschnyak, a Premonstratensian monk, in 1806, and entitled "Fundamentum Linguæ Zingaricæ". Later on, after its foundation, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences patronised the study of the gipsy language. As a result of this the work of J. Szmodich, entitled "Certain Characteristics of the Gipsy Language as Compared with Several Other Languages" appeared in 1836. The Academy also acquired for its library the "Gipsy Grammar" of Szmodich written in 1827, as well as his Gipsy-Hungarian and Hungarian-Gipsy dictionary written somewhat later. The gipsy grammar of J. Bornemissza, entitled "Elements of the Gipsy Language", was issued in 1853 with the support of the Academy.

The study of the history, early organisation, religious beliefs and customs of the gipsies began in the second half of the nineteenth century. Besides works on the gipsy language, historical and ethnographical studies dealing with the gipsies were published in steadily growing numbers and

examples of gipsy folk poetry were collected with great interest. Archduke Joseph's "Gipsy Grammar" issued in 1888 could be said to embody the main conclusions of all the preceding research into the gipsy language. Besides the gipsy dialects in Hungary this work also takes into consideration the other gipsy dialects, and with its rich bibliography of about 150 pages on the ethnology, history and folk poetry of the gipsies, and novels dealing with the gipsies, it is an indispensable handbook of gipsy research even today.

Gipsy research in Hungary, in general, reached its peak in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At this time, after the discontinuance of "The Journal of the Gipsy Lore Society" edited by Ch. G. Leland, for a certain period the "Ethnologische Mitteilungen aus Ungarn" issued in Hungary under the direction of A. Hermann, Archduke Joseph and H. Wlislocki became the leading organ of international gipsy research. Unfortunately, as a result of the First World War, gipsy research was almost completely discontinued in Hungary, and its reorganisation and further development can only be resumed now after our recovery from the blows of the Second World War.

## II. The History of the Gipsies in Hungary

The gipsies appeared in Hungary for the first time in the fourteenth century. Even in 1381 there was a village named "Cigany", and this indicates that already by this time there were gipsy settlements at certain places of the country. Thus it is likely that their immigration had occurred around the middle of the fourteenth century. The naming of villages after them in Hungary indicates that this early immigrant wave of the gipsies mostly settled down in the country. We have to distinguish them, therefore, from the nomadic gipsies who, passing through Hungary, appeared in 1417 in Germany, in 1419 in Switzerland and in

1422 in Italy. The safe conduct assurance issued by King Sigismund in 1423, which ensured safety for the gipsies in his territories and recognised the jurisdiction of their *woiwodes* over them, probably applied to this second immigrant wave of the gipsies.

We have no indication as to whether the first groups of gipsies immigrating into Hungary in the middle of the fourteenth century had any developed political organisation or not. Thus, it seems to be likely that these must have been comparatively small groups which were settled very soon as serfs. The gipsies arriving in the beginning of the fifteenth century, however, according to the safe conduct of King Sigismund, were governed by *woiwodes* and, according to the western sources, they had princes and a king. These denominations do not give any indication as to what were the original gipsy names of these offices. Later the gipsy name of the *woiwodes* is *thagar**; this is however, a loan-word borrowed from the Iranian *tagavar*, later *tagar*, *tagor* "carrier of the crown", the "king", although it is possible that it was borrowed by the ancestors of the gipsies while they were still in India. The circumstance that the sources from the beginning of the fifteenth century mention only one gipsy "king", while the leaders of the other gipsy groups appear under the denominations of "princes" and "counts", gives the impression that the gipsy groups which by this time were spread all over Europe had a common political organisation and a common king. In the work of Aventinus (Annales Boiorum VII, 509) this king is named *Zindelo*, but his name also occurs in the variation *Zindadel*. It is possible that in this name the official denomination of the gipsy king has been preserved. The element *zinda* of the form *Zindadel* may be identified with the word *Zindo*,

*This is cognate with *thakur*—chief or *raja*, so common in North India.

*zinde*, "gipsy", and the part *del* with the word "god". Since the Sanskrit word *deva* as the title of king was used in India already in the early middle ages, it is possible that we are faced with the same use of the word *del* in the name *Zindadel*. Therefore it is likely that in the name *Zindadel* the ancient original title of the gipsy king coming from India has been preserved. (This needs further research, since in Germany Zindo also meant Hindu.—*C.L.*)

From the beginning of the fifteenth century onwards the fate of the gipsies in Hungary had different turns. A group of them was settled by the kings as artisans, especially as armourers and smiths, in the free royal towns and in the neighbourhood of the forts. These received various privileges, and several documents have been preserved in which the kings re-corroborated these privileges. Thus, for example, King Mathias in his letter written in 1476 orders the *woiwodes* and *vice-woiwodes* of the Transylvanian parts of Hungary not to disturb the gipsies settled in the suburbs of the town Szeben, and he exempts the latter from their jurisdiction. This order was renewed by Mathias in 1487, by Ulaszlo II in 1492, and by Zs. Bathory, Prince of Transylvania, in 1581. A similar safe conduct was given by Ulaszlo II, King of Hungary, to T. Bolgar, gipsy *woiwode* (*vajvoda Farhonnum*) and his troop, who manufactured rifle bullets and other war material for Sigismund, Bishop of Pecs. We have several similar data on gipsies settled down for the service of the forts up to the eighteenth century.

Another group of the gipsies was settled as serfs on the estates of landlords. About them we have much less data. It seems that these gipsies were placed under the landlords—irrespective of whether they collected tax from them and appointed a *woiwode* over them where they were in greater numbers.

The third and very likely quite significant group of the gipsies, however, maintained its political organisation and nomadic way of life. Naturally, the kings endeavoured to draw these also under their control and for this purpose they appointed Hungarian noblemen as chief *woiwodes* of the gipsies. *These chief woiwodes had the jurisdiction of judges and were given the right to collect taxes from the gipsies.* In Hungary there were four such chief *woiwodes* and in Transylvania sometimes one and sometimes two. The last chief *woiwode* of the Danubian territories in Hungary was Colonel A. Ilosvay, who was appointed by Ferenc Rakoczi II, Prince of Hungary, in 1704. In Transylvania the last chief *woiwode* of the gipsies was P. Vallon, appointed by Gyorgy Rakoczi I, Prince of Transylvania (1630-1648). The institution of chief *woiwode* of the gipsies as royal officials was discontinued in the first half of the eighteenth century. This was in accordance with the circumstance that the regime started the regulation of the nomadic gipsies and endeavoured to settle them down completely and thus to incorporate them into the existing administrative system of the state. In connection with this the order *Regulatio Zingarorum* issued by Maria Theresa, Queen of Hungary, in 1767, contained detailed instructions. The settling of the nomadic gipsies, however, was not an easy job and although they settled down in ever increasing numbers, part of them continued to lead a nomadic life until as late as the end of the nineteenth century, so that our ethnographical researchers at this time still could make many valuable observations regarding their ancient tribal and clan system. The settling down of the gipsies as a whole may be regarded today as completed. Their total number in Hungary at present is estimated at about 30,000. The settled life, systematic school education and their participation in the more advanced productive work have considerably raised the material standard

of living and cultural demands of the gipsies. In view of this fact a National Gipsy Federation was set up recently which is scanning the problems of the gipsies in Hungary to promote the solution of these problems.

## III. The Language of the Gipsies in Hungary

As a result of research work carried out at the end of the last century, abundant material has been collected on the language of the gipsies in Hungary. We have to point out, however, that this linguistic material does not meet present-day demands in every respect. The language of the gipsies in Hungary has not yet been studied with phonetic means and from a phonological point of view, and thus for the time being we are not in a position to draw an exact picture of its phonemic system. Likewise, we do not see clearly the dialectal relations of the present-day gipsies in Hungary. On the other hand we should not forget. either, that we have in Hungary a considerable stock of material on the gipsy language already from the end of the eighteenth century and consequently we are in a position to follow the history of the gipsy language for a period of one and a half centuries. This possibility, however, has not been utilised as yet. We can comply with all these tasks only in the next few years. Therefore, the outlines of the gipsy language given below are in many respects incomplete and reflect the situation as existed about 80 to 100 years ago.

**The Phonetic System :**

*Vowels: a e i o u*

*Consonants:*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *k kh g* | (क ख ग) | *n n' m* | (न ण म) |
| *c c* (cha, chha) | (च छ) | *y r l l' f v* | (य र ल व फ़ व) |
| *t th d* | (ट ठ ड) | *s s z* | (स श ज़) |
| *t t'h d'* | (त थ द) | *h x* | (ह क्स) |
| *p ph b* | (प फ ब) | | |

The records give sometimes also long vowels. These data are, however, unsystematic and in many cases contradictory. Thus it is doubtful whether they occur as separate phonemes or have to be regarded only as variations of phonemes. They are to be found mostly in borrowed words and in open syllables.

THE ACCENT: By the end of the nineteenth century the accentuation of the first syllable—very likely under the influence of the Hungarian language—became dominant in the language of the gipsies in Hungary. The fact, however, that in certain cases the accent was even then on the last or the last but one or even on the last but two syllables, shows that this is only a later development.

NOUNS: *Substantives:* There are two genders, masculine and feminine. The words ending in *-o* or in a consonant are masculine, and those ending in *-i* or in a consonant are feminine.

The declension of the substantives has eight cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, ablative, instrumental and locative.

The nasal endings of the substantives are as follows:

| | Masculine | | Feminine | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | sg. | pl. | sg. | pl. |
| Nom. | *—o* | *—e, —a* | *—i, —a* | *—a* |
| Gen. | *—eskero* | *—engero* | *—akero* | *—engero* |
| Dat. | *—este* | *—ende* | *—ate* | *—ende* |
| Acc. | *—e* | *—en* | *—a* | *—en* |
| Voc. | *—eya* | *—ale* | *—iye, —aye* | *—ale* |
| Abl. | *—estar* | *—endar* | *—atar* | *—endar* |
| Instr. | *—eha, —aha* | *—enca* | *—aha* | *—enca* |
| Loc. | *—eske* | *—enge* | *—ake* | *—enge* |

Substantives may be formed from verbs and from nouns. One of the most frequent formative syllables is *-ben,-pen* (see Hindi-*pan*), e.g., *baro* "big, great", *baropen* "greatness" (see Hindi *bacca, bacpan, "child"*, "childhood").

The adjectives are declined just as the substantives. If the substantive is preceded by the adjective, only the substantive is declined. The adjective can be formed by adding the genitive suffix (which is actually a formative syllable of adjectives) *-eskero,-akero,* as well as by the following formative syllables: -tno -(v)*alo* -(v)*aro,* -(i) *kanto* e.g., *rati* "night", *ratutno* "nocturnal", etc.

PRONOUNS :

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Personal pronoun :* | sg. | *me* (Hindi *main*) | pl. | āmen (Hindi *ham*) |
| | | *tu* (Hindi *tu*) | | Tumen (Hindi *tum*) |
| | | *ov, oy* | | *on* |

*Possessive pronoun :*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| sg. | mro (masc.) | mri (fem). | pl. *mre* |
| | *tro* | *tri* | *tre* |
| | *leskero* | *lākero* | *lākre* |
| sg. | *amāro* | *amāri* | *amāre* |
| | *tumāro* | *tumārì* | *tumāre* |
| | *lēngero* | *lēngeri* | *lēngere* |

(see Hindi *merā, terā, hamārā, tumhārā*)

*Demonstrative pronoun : adā* "ez", *odoy* "az"

Relative and interrogative pronouns : *ko, ka* "who"?
*so, sa* "which, what

Numerals : *yek, duy, trin, stār, pānz, sov, efta, ovto, ena, des* etc.

Articles : *o* (mas.), *i* (fem.) *e* (pl.)

VERBS :

*Conjugation of the verb : marel* "beat"

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Present : | sg. | *mārav* | pl. | *māras* |
| | | *māres* | | *māren* |
| | | *mārel* | | *māren* |
| Past : | sg. | *māravahi* | pl. | *mārasahi* |
| | | *maresahi* | | *marenahi* |
| | | *marelahi* | | *marenahi* |
| Future : | sg. | *mārava* | pl. | *mārasa* |
| | | *māresa* | | *marena* |
| | | *mārela* | | *mārena* |
| Present perfect : | sg. | *mardom* | pl. | *mārdam* |
| | | *mārrdal* | | *mardan* |
| | | *mārdas* | | *mārde* |
| Past perfect : | sg. | *mārdomahi* | pl. | *mardāmahi* |
| | | *mardālahi* | | *mardānahi* |
| | | *mardāhi* | | *mardēhi* |

Infinitive : *mārel* Imperative : *mar, maren* Past participle : *mārdo*

The vocabularies of the Hungarian gipsy dialects differ from one another mainly in the proportion of Hungarian and Rumanian loan-words. They, however. preserved well enough the ancient basic vocabulary of Old Indian origin.

To demonstrate this oldest stratum of Hungarian gipsy vocabulary, I have selected a list of the most significant gipsy etymologies as follows. I have sorted out critically the gipsy etymologies proposed by Miklosich and other scholars and added to them some of my own. For practical reasons I give the Old Indian and Hindi equivalents of the gipsy words instead of the Dumaki and other New Indian languages.

PARTS OF THE BODY:

| Gipsy | O Ind. | Hindi |
|---|---|---|
| *sero* 'head' | *sira—id.* | *sir id.* |
| *bal* 'hair' | *vāla*—'tail-hair' | *bāl*, 'hair' |
| *pov* 'eyebrow' | *bhrū—id.* | |
| *muy* 'mouth' | *mukha—id.* | *munh id.* |
| *vost* 'lip' | *ostha—id.* | *honth id.* |
| *dand* 'tooth' | *danta—id.* | *dānt id.* |
| *cib* 'tongue' | *jihva—id.* | *jibh id.* |
| *tar* 'gorge' | *tāra*—'sounding loudly' | |
| *yakh* 'eye' | *akṣi—id.* | *ānhk id.* |
| *asva* 'tear' | *asru—id.* | *ānsū id.* |
| *kan* 'ear' | *karna—id.* | *kān id.* |
| *nak* 'nose' | *nāsikā—id.* | *nāk id.* |
| *men* 'neck' | *manyā—id.* | |
| *kuni* 'elbow' | *kona*—'corner, angle' | *kohni id.* |
| *hast* 'hand' | *hasta—id.* | *hāth id.* |
| *nay* 'finger-nail' | *nakha—id.* | |
| *angusto* 'finger' | *angustha—id.* | |
| *yilo* 'heart' | *hrd—id.* | |
| *pasavro* 'rib' | *parsu—id.* | *pasli id.* |
| *pro* 'foot' | *pāda—id.* | *pāno id.* |
| *khur* 'heel' | *khura*—'hoof' | *khur* 'hoof' |
| *per* 'belly' | | *pet id* |
| *por* 'intestine' | *poti*—'rectum' | |
| *cang* 'knee' | *janghā*—'*shin*' | *jāngh* '*hip*' |
| *bul* 'bottom' | *buli—id.* | |
| *phak* 'wing' | *paksa—id.* | *pankh id.* |
| *dzar* 'hair' | *jatā*—'matted hair' | *jata id.* |
| *dzor* 'beard' | *jūta*—'twisted hair' | *jūra id.* |
| *mas* 'meat' | *māmsa—id.* | *māns id.* |
| *rat* 'blood' | *rakta—id.* | |
| *lim* 'nose-dirt' | *limpati* 'dirty' | |

FAMILY AND KINSHIP :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *phen* 'sister' | *bhagini—id.* | *bahin id.* |
| *phral* 'brother' | *bhrutar—id.* | *bhāi id.* |
| *dzamutro* 'son-in-law' | *jāmātar—id.* | |
| *sasro* 'father-in-law' | *svasura—id.* | *sasur id.* |
| *sasuy* 'mother-in-law' | *svasura—id.* | *sās id.* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *kak* 'nephew, uncle' | | *kākā* 'uncle' |
| *khalo* 'uncle' | | *khāla* 'aunt' |
| *salo* 'brother-in-law' | *syāla—id.* | *sālā id.* |
| *phivlo* 'widow' | *vidhavā—id.* | *bevā id.* |
| *manus* 'men' | *manus—id.* | |
| *dveno* 'person' | *jana*—'men' | *jan* 'men' |
| BIRDS AND ANIMALS : | | |
| *ciriklo* 'bird' | *ciri*—'parrot' | *ciriyā* 'bird, sparrow' |
| *vul'o* 'owl' | *uluka—id.* | *ullū—id.* |
| *sap* 'snake' | *sarpa—id.* | *sānp—id.* |
| *sosoy* 'hare' | *sasa—id.* | |
| *ric* 'bear' | *rkṣa—id.* | *rich—id.* |
| *khuro* 'foal' | *ghota*—'horse | *ghora* 'horse' |
| *kher* 'donkey' | | *gadha—id.* |
| *guru* 'ox' | *gaura*—'Bos gaurus | |
| *makhe* 'fly' | *maksā*—'*id.*' | *makhi—id.* |
| *musa* 'mouse' | *mūsa—id.* | |
| *maco* 'fish' | *matsya—id.* | *macchi—id.* |
| *bakro* 'ram' | *bākura*— 'of goat skin' | *bakri* 'goat' |
| *kir* 'ant' | *kita*—'worm, insect' | *kirā* 'insect' |
| *likh* 'nit' | *likṣā—id.* | *likh—id.* |
| *anro* 'egg' | *anda—id.* | *anda—id.* |
| *sing* 'horn' | *srnga—id.* | *sing—id.* |
| NATURE : | | |
| *kham* 'sun' | *gharma*—'great heat' | *gham*—'sunlight' |
| *con* 'moon' | *candra—id.* | *cand—id.* |
| *phuv* 'earth' | *bhūmi—id.* | |
| *than* 'place' | *sthāna—id.* | *thān—id.* |
| *rati* 'night' | *rātri—id.* | *rāt—id.* |
| *pani* 'water' | *pāna*—'drink' | *pāni—id* |
| *yag* 'fire' | *agni—id.* | *āg—id.* |
| *len* (*nel*) 'river' | *nadi—id.* | |
| *hiv* 'snow' | *hima—id.* | *him—id.* |
| *zaro* 'great heat' | *jvara—id.* | *jvar—id.* |
| *thuv* 'smoke' | *dhūma—id.* | *dhuan—id.* |
| *posi* 'dust, sand' | *pāmsu—id.* | |
| *khan* 'stink' | *gandha*—'odour' | *gandh* 'odour' |
| *dives* 'day' | *divasa—id.* | *divas—id.* |
| *masak* 'mouth' | *māsa—id.* | *mas—id.* |
| *bers* 'year' | *varsa—id.* | *baras*—'*id*'. |
| *ciro* '*time*' | *cira*—'long-lived' | *cir* 'long time' |
| *linay, nilay* 'summer' | *nidāgha—id.* | |
| *yivend* 'winter' | *hemanta—id.* | |
| *angar* 'coal' | *angāra—id.* | |
| *rup* 'silver' | *rūpa*—'form' | *rūpya*—'silver' |
| *khandini* 'sulphur' | | *gandhak—id.* |
| *sonako* 'gold' | *svarna—id.* | *sona—id.* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *kast* 'wood' | *kāstha*—'piece of wood' | *kath* 'wood' |
| *kanro* 'thorn' | *kantaka—id.* | *kanta—id.* |
| *patrin* 'leaves' | *patra*—'leaf' | *patta—id.* |
| HABITATION AND SOCIETY : | | |
| *diz* 'territory' | *desa—id.* | *des—id.* |
| *gav* 'village' | *grāma—id.* | *ganv—id.* |
| *kher* 'house' | *grha—id.* | *ghar—id.* |
| *duvar* 'gate' | *dvār—id.* | |
| *khanig* 'well' | *khani*—'shaft' | *khani—id.* |
| *khuva* 'ditch' | *kūpa*—'pit, well' | *kuan—id.* |
| *kher* 'hole' | *karta* 'pit, hole' | *khad—id.* |
| *gere* 'pit' | *garta*—'pit, hole' | *garha—id.* |
| *ray* 'lord' | *rāk*—'king' | *ray* 'king, lord |
| *rani* 'lady' | *rājni*—'queen | *rani—id.* |
| *devel* 'god' | *deva—id.* | *deo—id.* |
| *rasay* 'priest' | *rsi*—'sage, saint' | |
| *rom* 'gipsy' | *domba*—'a man of low caste' | |
| *cor* 'thief' | *caura—id.* | *cor—id.* |
| *lubni* 'prostitute' | *lubhyati* 'desire' | *lubhana—id.* |
| FOOD, TOOLS, PRODUCTS : | | |
| *manro* 'bread' | *manda*—'skim' | |
| *thud* 'milk' | *dugdha—id.* | *dudh—id.* |
| *aro* 'flour' | | *ata—id.* |
| *khil* 'undried fresh butter, fat' | *ksira*—'milk' | *khir* 'milk-rice' |
| *lon* 'salt' | *lavana*—'salted' | *lon* 'salt' |
| *sut* 'vinegar' | *sukta*—'vinegary' | |
| *taro* 'rum' | *tāla*—'wine palm' | *tar—id.* |
| | *tāli*—'palm wine' | |
| *drakh* 'grape-vine' | *drāksā—id.* | *dakh—id.* |
| *khas* 'hay' | | *ghas—id.* |
| *phus* 'straw' | | *bhusa—id.* |
| *curi* 'knife' | *churikā—id.* | *churi—id.* |
| *kat* 'scissors' | *kartari* 'cut' | *krti*—'knife' |
| *kilo* 'stake' | *kila* 'peg, wedge' | *khil—id.* |
| *suv* 'needle' | *sūka—id.* | *sui—id.* |
| *khanro* 'sword' | *khadga—id.* | |
| *khoro* 'jug' | *ghata—id.* | *ghat—id.* |
| *caro* 'dish' | *caru*—'pot' | |
| *phal* 'board' | *phalaka—id.* | |
| *gono* 'sack' | *goni—id.* | |
| *than* 'broad-cloth' | | *thān* 'cloth' |
| *phar* 'silk' | *pata* 'home spun' | *pāt* 'silk' |
| *colo* 'heavy rug' | *coda—, cola*—'jacket' | |
| *selo* 'cord' | *sata*—'shawl, band' | |
| *lil* 'letter, writing' | *lekha—id.* | *likhnā* 'write' |
| *lovo* 'money' | | *ropaya—id.* |

Besides these etymologies there are some hundred further words in the dialects of the Hungarian gipsies belonging to their basic vocabulary of Old Indian origin.

## IV. Ethnography of the Gipsies in Hungary

Regarding the ethnography of the gipsies in Hungary a substantial body of material was collected by the investigators at the end of the last century, and this has been supplemented with valuable new data in many respects by the investigations carried on in recent years. In spite of this, however, our knowledge is still deficient in many respects. The reason for this is that the investigations did not deal with every field of the ethnography of the gipsies in an equally thorough way, and much of the more recent material has not yet been published while, on the other hand, the culture of the gipsies is continuously changing, and today it shows a different picture in many respects from what it was half a century ago.

In Hungary, the gipsies were distributed into two clearly separated groups already in the last century: the group of the settled gipsies (*gletecore*) and the group of the nomadic gipsies (*kortorar*). There were significant differences between the two with regard to both language and social organisation. The ancient clan and tribal system was preserved only by the nomadic gipsies. The tribes of these (*maliya*), distributed into clans (*gakkiya*) lead a nomadic life under tribal chiefs or *woiwodes* (*thagar*). Their clans were under clan chiefs (*saybidzo*) and lived together only in their winter camps. The settled and the nomadic gipsies despised each other and did not conclude marriages with each other. With the nomadic gipsies, marriage preserved matriarchal features and was matrilocal in character. The husband joined the clan of his wife. took up the clan name of his wife, and by his marriage he ceased to be a member of his original clan.

During the last sixty to eighty years even the nomadic gipsies settled down gradually and thus their old social organisation began to dissolve. As a result of this it is extremely difficult today to draw a clear picture of their ethnography. At the end of the last century, Archduke Joseph distinguished "Trans-Danubian", "Carpathian" and "nomadic Hungarian" gipsies, and "Wallachian gipsies". Substantially, from the point of view of the language, the investigators of today distinguish also two groups of gipsies in Hungary: "Hungarian gipsies" (*romungro*) and "Wallachian gipsies" (*vlasiko rom*) or "Carpathian gipsies" and "Wallachian gipsies". Of these two groups, the first has been living in Hungary from an earlier period, while the second immigrated into Hungary at a later date from the territory of Rumania. It is not clear how the groups called by the investigators of today "Hungarian" or "Carpathian" gipsies are related to the earlier "Trans-Danubian", "Carpathian" and "nomadic Hungarian" gipsies. It seems to be likely—even from the viewpoint of the characteristics of their language—that the name "Wallachian gipsy" at the end of the last century and today relates to the same group of gipsies. It is possible that earlier there were also such nomadic gipsies in Hungary who were different from the "Wallachian gipsies". It seems, however, that the majority of these settled down in the first half of this century, and thus only the "Wallachian gipsies" maintained their nomadic life—at least partly—until as late as the last decade. At any rate the old social organisation can be traced mostly among these gipsies. On the basis of professions they are divided into characteristic groups, which are called tribes by certain investigators and castes by others. Such are the *Lovari*, "horse dealers"; the *Colari*, "blanket handlers"; the *Cerhari*, "tent-dwellers" or "nomads"; the *Masari*, "fishermen", etc. Within these groups the "Wallachian gipsies"

are distributed into numerous clans. The more recent investigations also mention *woiwodes*, whose name with the gipsies today is *muyalo* or *sibalo* (judge). Unfortunately, the character of this group of the "Wallachian gipsies" is not clear from a social point of view. They are hardly to be identified with the gipsy tribes (*maliya*), observed by the investigators of the last century. In this connection, more thorough ethnographical study of them is required.

The gipsies in Hungary have a rich folk poetry. The investigators recorded many folk songs and folk tales of theirs in the last century. The investigation of the gipsies, renewed in Hungary during the last ten years, is in an increasing degree directed towards the characteristic tunes and ballads of the gipsies. More than 2,000 gipsy tunes have been recorded (the overwhelming majority of them have not yet been published) and texts of several ballads and tales have also been collected.

Likewise, abundant material has been collected on the beliefs and customs of the gipsies in Hungary, especially by the investigators of the end of the last century. These data unfold the outlines of a peculiar, archaic religious belief full of superstitions, and a characteristic gipsy mythology. The typical figures of gipsy mythology are the *urme*, fairies deciding human fates; the *nivasi*, "water fairies"; the *phuvus*, "underground ghosts"; the *kesali*, "forest fairies"; the *Carana* bird, which reminds one of the *Garuda* of the old Indian mythology, etc.

This rich material on folk poetry, mythology and popular customs has not yet been sufficiently evaluated from a historical point of view. It would be important, first of all, to clarify what in the characteristic culture of the gipsies are the ancient elements brought from India. In the gipsy

tales, several such motifs could already be pointed out which are well known from the old Indian literature of tales and thus they very likely represent elements brought from India. Probably it may be possible in the future also to trace several such reminders of Indian culture in other fields of the culture of the gipsies.

## Chapter IX

# FREE AS BIRDS

Integration Is Slow—British Journalist's View—Military Service Evaded—The Vanishing Trick—Violins Help—Education in Colleges—No more Rajas—Ten Thousand Musicians—Gipsy Cultural Society—A Revolutionary Gipsy—A Hard Job—I Vote for optimism.

[*The following interesting account of the life of gipsies in Hungary today was given to me by Mr. Henderson, Reuters correspondent in Budapest*]

HUNGARIAN GIPSIES, who for hundreds of years have wandered across the face of Eastern Europe, are about the only people today who can slip across the country's tightly-sealed and guarded frontiers and get away with it.

In face of Government efforts to settle them and "integrate" them in society, and although they are forbidden to roam at will, a small number of Hungary's 150,000 to 200,000 gipsies still follow the old life.

Under communist regulations, gipsies, colourful and self-reliant people renowned for their skill with horses and at playing the violin, are supposed to have permits when they move from one casual employment to another. But they are adept at getting round regulations.

According to officials like Mr. Peter Kovacs, Head of the Nationality Department at the Ministry of Culture, they cross frontiers to avoid military service and come back to Hungary perhaps a year later with papers showing that they have aged ten years in the interval.

Others indulge in a little smuggling. How do they manage to slip through ?

Nothing simpler, Mr. Kovacs says. Out come the violins, the gipsies start playing music, telling stories and fortunes, and when you look round they are gone—across the frontier.

And because they are gipsies, nobody minds very much

Official estimates say that only about 50,000 of Hungary's gipsies speak the gipsy tongue, or Romany, as they call it, as their mother-tongue. Others speak Rumanian and other dialects. But the hundreds of thousands of gipsies in Eastern Europe—in Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland and the Soviet Union are still linked by common languages or traditions.

Official policy is that Hungarian gipsies are like any other Hungarians.

For example, they are not considered a national minority—like Germans, Rumanians, Slovaks, Bulgarians and Yugoslavs here—and unlike these groups have no special schools of their own.

Most of them are illiterate and the idea of compulsory schooling is quite alien to them. When the authorities managed—on paper—to enrol all gipsy children of school-age for the current school year, no one was very surprised that many continued to play truant.

The long-term policy of the Government is to educate a gipsy "intelligentsia", by making openings at colleges and universities for promising pupils who in turn will provide community leaders of a kind the communists would like to see.

These, in theory, would replace the old gipsy "kings" and "queens"—called in gipsy "Raja" and "Rani", live in decent houses and be respected citizens.

But, for the moment, the older and more picturesque patterns live on and die hard.

Gipsies are said to be still more or less divided into their tribal clans—who go under such graphic names as the Robbers, the Pickpockets, the Horse Dealers, the Carpet Merchants, the Coppersmiths, Tent Dwellers, Animal Buriers, and so on.

About 10,000 musicians form one of the most important and richest groups.

Hardly a restaurant or eating place—down to the smallest inn—is without its gipsy band. Dark-skinned, deft and continually smiling, they are masters of slow, yearning melodies, with the violins swooping up and down nostalgically, and hot-blooded folk music.

The bands usually have five or six members, always led by a violinist, and accompanied by a double bass, second violin, clarionet and cimbalon (a stringed table instrument played with two small hammers).

The top bands in Budapest can command big prices at private functions and, Socialist State or not, have the knack of making the customers feel lordly.

A year ago the authorities encouraged the formation of the Cultural Association of Hungarian Gipsies, with a gipsy secretary, Mrs. Maria Laszlo. (I met her at a gipsy leaders' meeting—*C.L.*)

Greying and efficient, with gold-rimmed pince-nez, Mrs. Laszlo has no time for the more colourful and romantic sides of gipsy life. All that is mere "exoticum", she says disparagingly, using the Hungarian word.

Although descended from Cinka Panna, a well-known woman musician at the court of Ferenc Rakoczi, a leader of the 1703 rebellion against Austria, Maria Laszlo is a new-style gipsy.

She was arrested and imprisoned for a month in 1937 for demanding the same rights for gipsies as other people, she says, and kept under police surveillance for three years. But, she said, she was not a communist.

The ordinary Hungarian gipsy seems not so very different from his forefathers, whatever the officials say, and it looks as if they will have a hard job changing him.

Thus spoke Mr. Henderson. I do not agree with him in toto. I think the gipsies will settle down as hard-working citizens within the next ten years, since the governments of Eastern Europe are giving them every facility—liberal scholarships, education, homes, jobs and training opportunities for professions.

## CHAPTER X

# INDIAN TRIBES IN EUROPE

### DR. RADE UHLIK INTERVIEWED

**Veteran Gipsologist's View—Hindi Names of Tribes—Belief in Swarga—Origin of Gipsy Language—Sixty per cent Sanskritic Words—A Lesson in Romany.**

* * *

***On the basis of common language and anthropological types it has been proved that gipsies came from India. Moreover, names of gipsy tribes in Europe are similar to those in India such as Jat (Zutt), Sindhi (Sinte), and Lovari (Lohars i.e., ironsmiths).***

*Dr. Rade Uhlik of Yugoslavia.*

* * * *

YUGOSLAVIA was the first country I visited during my 'gipsy tour' of Europe and America. Our Ambassador to that country, Nawab Ali Yavar Jung, advised me to proceed to Serajevo (where the First World War began) and meet the leading gipsologist, Dr. Rade Uhlik. In Belgrade our Embassy officials took sincere interest in my studies into the origin of gipsies. Mr. Dhawan, First Secretary, booked a trunk call and fixed an interview with Dr. Uhlik, who has published no fewer than thirty papers and books dealing with the gipsies. I took a night train to Serajevo which carried me through beautiful landscape. I sat up most of the time and watched the moon-lit fields and gardens. Dr. Uhlik spent two full days introducing me to museum authorities, making available to me pictures of gipsy types and arranging interviews with the gipsies in the city. He also had Indian-style meals cooked for me and flooded me

with books on the subject. The aged scholar lent me his only pullover to save me from the severe cold of the place. He said good-bye in two beautiful Hindi words: *Phir Milenge* (We shall meet again).

A short account of my interview with Dr. Uhlik on the origin of the gipsies and their language, Romany, follows :

*Question* : Do all gipsologists agree that the gipsies came from India?

*Answer*: Yes, on the basis of the language and anthropological types. Moreover, some names of gipsy tribes in Europe are also very similar to tribe names in India. In India you have the tribe Dom, in Armenia they call them Lom and in Europe they were called Rom and Romany.

*Question*: Please give me some tribal names common to India and Europe.

*Answer* : Lovari in East Europe and Lohar (ironsmiths) in India; Zaxarachi and Saurashtri; Tamara and Tamar; Sinte and Sindhis; Zutts and Jats. We have also Thakurs in several parts of Eastern Europe, especially in Hungary. You very well know that Thakurs are chiefs in India, Rabindranath was a Thakur too.

*Question*: Have you found any legends on India from gipsy lore?

*Answer* : Yes, I have found many, and written several books on them. I have written the story of their legendary King Penga and story of Swarga (paradise) current among them. The gipsies talk of Linga and they bake a cake in the form of *lingam*.

*Question* : How many words of Romany have you collected?

*Answer* : About ten thousand.

*Question*: How many of them are pure and how many have been adapted from European languages?

*Answer* : Here we have the best preserved Romany called Ghurbet, the language of the roaming gipsy. (Ghurbet is a cognate of an Indo-Iranian word meaning poverty.)

*Question* : What percentage of the Romany words is of Sanskritic origin?

*Answer*: I should say sixty per cent of the words are Indian, five per cent Greek and the rest derived from languages of countries visited by the gipsies during their migrations over the centuries.

I then asked Dr. Uhlik to give me some typical Romany words of Sanskritic origin. He gave me a list not only of some of the more prominent among such words but also of some sentences as proof of his thesis and said he could give me all the ten thousand if I spent a few days with him. In the manner of a school-teacher he gave me the 'singhara' (water chestnut) and said: "We shall begin our lesson with this sacred fruit of the Hindus. The gipsies have preserved the fruit, its name and its use." Then the lesson began.

| *Romany* | *Indian* | *English* |
|---|---|---|
| Singhara | Singhara | Water chestnut |
| Biyah | Biyah | Marriage |
| Phen | Behn | Sister |
| Bhukh | Bhukh | Hunger |
| Dukh | Dukh | Pain |
| Pankh | Pankh | Wing |
| Chiri | Chiri | Sparrow |
| Phral | Bhra (Punjabi) | Brother |
| Kak (*a*) | Kaka | Uncle |
| Bibi | Bibi | Aunt |
| Kasht | Kaṣht | Wood |
| Pani | Pani | Wator |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| J(Y)ag | Ag(Agni) | Fire |
| Sovav | Sona | Sleep |
| Jibh (chib) | Jibh | Tongue |
| Chhik | Chhink (Chhik-Punjabi) | Sneeze |
| Sero | Sir | Head |
| Dikhav | Dekhna | To see |
| Dojav | Darya | Big river |
| Gav | Gaon | Village |

(They call London Bara Gav)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Chun | Chun | Moon |
| Shak | Shak | Vegetables |
| Chheh | Chhehr | Girl |
| Techang (Chang) | Jangh | Leg |
| Dant | Dant | Teeth |
| Kan | Kan | Ears |
| Lacho | Achha | Good |
| Salo | Sala | Brother-in-law |
| Devata | Devata | Deity |
| Sap | Sap (P) Serp. | Serpent |
| Gra (Gras) | Ghora | Horse |
| Guruv | Gow | Cow |
| Thud | Dudh (P) | Milk |
| Amaro | Hamara | Ours |
| Andre | Antar, Andar(P) | Inside |
| Angle | Agla and Aga(P) | Front |
| Avava | Ana | To come |
| Bai | Bahn(P), Bai | Arm |
| Bal | Bal | Hair |
| Bandava, Pandava | Bandhna | To tie |
| Baro | Bara | Big or Elder |
| Mangava | Mangna | To ask for |
| Manga | Manga | To beg |
| Maki | Makhi | Fly |
| Lon | Lavan and Lun | Salt |
| Mutra | Mutra | Urine |
| Merava | Marna | To die |
| Manush | Manush | Man |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Manushi | Manushi | Wife |
| Matto | Mast | Intoxicated |
| Raya | Raja | King |
| Rani | Rani | Queen |

The Queen of England is called Baro (big) Rani.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kan | Gandh | Smell |
| Kam | Gham | Heat |
| Kameva | Kama | Love |
| Sovava-Sutto | Sona | Sleep |
| Kai | Kahan | Where |
| Tero | Tera | Your |
| Kev | Ghar | House |
| Churi | Chhuri | Knife |
| Shoon | Sun | Listen |
| Jivipan | Jivanyapan | Living |

Some Gipsy Verbs : Dick, Jiv, Bikn, Kin, Pee, Hal, Av, Jal, Kair, Poggra, Shoon, Rokra, Caur, Chore, Heta, Cour, Drab, Dook, Nash, Rook, Pek, Tov.

*Verb forms, exemplified in sentences :*

| | |
|---|---|
| I do | *Me kerav* |
| You do | *Tu keres* |
| He does | *Voh kere!* |
| She does | *Voh kerel* |
| We do | *Men keras* |
| You (plural) | *Tumen kerent* |
| They do | *Voh kerent* |
| I want | *Mangav* |
| I eat | *Khav* |
| I sleep | *Sovav* |
| I go | *Jav* |
| I stand | *Achav* |
| I sit | *Beshav* |
| I flee | *Nashav* |
| I beat | *Marav* |
| I die | *Merav* |
| I jump | *Kutav* (*Kudna*—to jump) |
| To feed baby | *Chuchi Dav* (to give milk to baby) |
| I see | *Dikhav* |
| I hear | *Sunav* |

| | |
|---|---|
| I drink | *Piav* |
| I speak | *Vakerav* |
| I forget | *Bistarav* (*Bisarana* in Punjabi) |
| I am searching for | *Rodav* |
| I guard | *Arakhav* |
| I take | *Lav* |
| I cook | *Pekav* |

*Some simple sentences :*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Kai Tero Ker* | Where is your house? |
| *Kai si the churi* | Where is the knife ? |
| *Shoon Tu Daya* | Do thou hear, mother ? |
| *Sore simensar si men* | We are all relations, all who are with us are ourselves. |
| *Mero ker India* | I am from India. |
| *Shoon pal* | Listen, brother. |
| *Shoon pen* | Listen, sister. |
| *My sero dukkers* | My head aches. |
| *Nor men chior* | We have no girls. |
| *Nevi tud from the Guveni* | New milk from the cow. |
| *Sar shin* | How are you ? |
| *Sar shin meero rye* | How are you Sir ? (Rye is from Raja) |
| *Sar shin meeri rawnie* (*Rani*) | How are you Madam ? |
| *Mande Putch'd yoi* | I asked she (her). |
| *A yokki juva a yokki* | Expert woman in telling fortune. |
| *So kerella for jivipen* | What does she do for a living ? |
| *Mande jins lali misto Prala* | I know her very well brother. |
| *She dukkers, parla, she dukkers* | She tells fortunes, brother, she tells fortunes. |
| *It is my Devel's kerrimus help asarlus* | It is my God's doing and we cannot help at all. |
| *Ma pi kikomi* | Don't drink any more. |
| *Ma rokra kekoni* | Don't speak any more. |
| *Bari shil se mande* | I have a great cold. |
| *Tatto tu coccori pen* (*Behn*) | Warm thyself, sister. |
| *kekkeno pawni dov odoi* | There is no water there. |
| *Tatto ratti so len* | They have hot blood. |
| *Car's tute jibbing* | Where are you living ? |

## Chapter XI

# GIPSIES IN BULGARIA

**Equal Rights—Happy Homes—No Longer Poor—Co-operation Pays—Poets and Physicians.**

THERE ARE about 200,000 gipsies in the People's Republic of Bulgaria which has a total population of 7.6 million.

The great changes that have taken place and are taking place in Bulgaria since September 9, 1944, have created the necessary conditions for bringing about a change in the life of the gipsies. The gipsy population, together with the rest of the people of Bulgaria, have got freedom and with it immense opportunities for livelihood and scope for cultural development.

The rights of all citizens of the People's Republic of Bulgaria are equal. Article 71 of the Bulgarian Constitution says "All citizens of the People's Republic of Bulgaria are equal before the law. No privileges derived of nationality, faith and financial status are recognised", and in Article 3 it is written: "All citizens of the People's Republic who have completed 18 years of age, irrespective of sex, nationality, race, religion, education, profession, social position and financial status are eligible to vote and elect."

While in the past the gipsy population led mostly a nomadic life and did not have any fixed and stable profession, now large sections of them in the towns of Sliven, Plovdiv, Varna, Sofia, Stara Zagocra, Dimitrovo, Dimitrograd, Vratsa, Vidin, Tolbuhin, and elsewhere take part in industrial production and construction. Everyone has a stable job and

many of them receive the required technological qualifications. Nearly 50 per cent of the gipsy population works in factories and construction works. Thus, for example, about 4,000 are employed in various industrial enterprises in Sliven alone. There are quite a number of top-class workmen, shift and shop foremen among them. Assen Hasanov, a gipsy, is an engineer at the V. Lenin Metallurgical Plant, and Encho Gospodinov, another gipsy, is the recipient of the highest order of the People's Republic of Bulgaria "Georgi Dimitrov".

Gipsies who are engaged in production are constantly improving their material condition. Let us take the case of Ioncho Sando Avramov, a miner in the town of Madan. Nine times he has been declared 'shock worker' in the course of four or five years and has been earning about 3,000 leva per month. His son, also a miner, earns about 1,500 leva per month, while the average earning of a worker is about 850 leva.

A large section of the gipsy population are members of the village co-operative farms. Many of the gipsies who are members of these co-operative farms make large incomes. As for example, Hassan Givejiev of Samuilovo village earned, besides large quantities of food products, 14,000 leva in cash in one year alone. Special care is taken for the education and training of the gipsies and their children. Over 20,000 gipsy children are studying in the basic and primary schools of the country, whereas before September 9, 1944, their number never exceeded 4,000. There are 200 gipsies with university education in the People's Republic of Bulgaria and every year between 30 and 40 young gipsies are admitted to the university.

The State takes particular care to build houses for the gipsies. The Bulgarian Investment Bank releases loans for

building houses, and the Ministry of Agriculture constructs houses for those gipsies who work in the State farms.

Health and hygiene receive great care. The results of such care are already in evidence. During the past few years not a single case of typhoid has been reported, and child mortality has been reduced to the minimum.

Many political, economic and cultural workers, engineers, journalists, writers, physicians, officers and teachers have risen among the gipsies. The name of the gipsy poet Usin Kerim is known beyond the borders of Bulgaria. A daily newspaper is also run by a gipsy journalist in Bulgaria.

The gipsies freely pursue their religious faith. A section of them are Muslims and the rest are Christians, but they all remember India as "Baro Than"—the great land of their ancestors.

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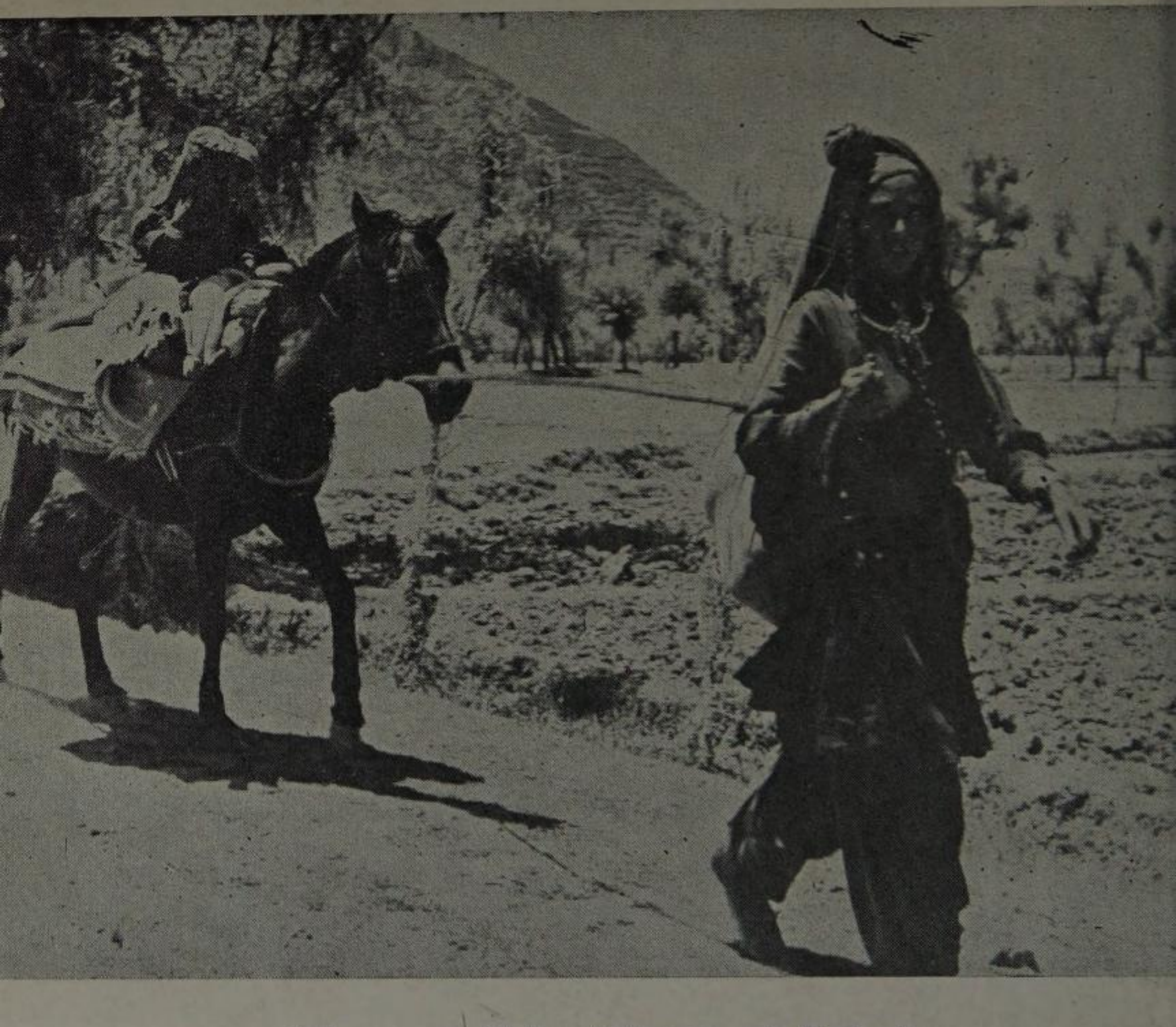
*This article is based on a speech by Mr. Shakir of Bulgaria, a gipsy member of the Parliament of the Republic. There are twelve gipsies in the Bulgarian Parliament.—*C.L.*

**The preceding 22 photographs showed gipsies from various parts of the world. The following eight photographs of nomadic tribes from India will enable the readers to note the facial and other similarities between them and the European gipsies. Seen above is an elder of the Gadia Lohar tribe from Rajasthan.**

**Two Gaddi women of Kulu, Himachal Pradesh**

**A party of Gujjars camping in a grove in Kashmir**



**Gujjar woman with her childern on mule, Kash mir**

## CHAPTER XII

# GIPSIES IN RUSSIA

**He Has Fared Well Because of Talents—Contribution to Russia's Rich Literature and Music—Catherine and the Gipsy—Hindu Legends Preserved—Kounavine's Studies—Tale of a Great Sage—Some Gipsy Hymns—Prayers to 'Om', Brahma, Agni and Lakshmi.**

THERE NEVER has been any instituted or special persecution against the gipsy in Russia and he has, at all times, because of his special talents, fared very well there as compared to the rest of the general population.

Russian songs, Russian folk-lore and Russian literature are crammed with gipsy lore. There is not a Russian poet of note, not a Russian writer who has not written about Tsigane (gipsies). There is hardly a princely house that is free of the gipsy strain. There were about 200,000 gipsies in Russia some twenty years ago, and much that is colourful and beautiful in Russia has had its origin in the Black Brothers (gipsies).

It is well to think of the flower as well as of the bee when one tastes honey. Whether the full-blooded gipsy survives or not in Russia, the degree of colour and wildness which gipsies have given to Russian art and Russian music, to Russian literature and Russian dancing will remain imperishable.

Fifty years ago a Russian writer said: "Gipsy women drive the gilded youth of Russia with enthusiasm and stir their torpid souls in much the same way as ardent spirits tickle the dull palates." Several marriages between gipsy women and Russian nobles have been recorded in history.

The story goes that Catherine the Great once watched a tall, bedraggled bearded gipsy passing up and down below her windows. She ordered Prince Potemkin to bring him to her apartments. An hour later the gipsy was ushered into her presence. But he had been bathed, perfumed and worn beautiful garments. Catherine was furious. "I wanted him as he was, and not as he is," she cried out. The gipsy looked at her steadily, and then recalling to Catherine her humble origin in which he had known her, he said: "And I too have wanted you as you were and not as you are." Incensed by the remarks of the gipsy, Catherine ordered that he be stripped and made to stay outdoors overnight, chained to a warmly dressed soldier. It was forty degrees below zero. In the morning, Catherine went to see what had happened. The soldier was dead, frozen stiff, while the naked gipsy was snoring peacefully beside him.

According to M. J. Kounavine, a Russian research scholar, the gipsies in Russia have preserved legends of Brahma, Indra, Vishnu, Lakshmi and Prithvi. The last goddess they call Mata (Mother). A physician by profession, Kounavine was an indefatigable worker in the domain of philological science. He was born in 1820. He devoted 35 years of his life to research into the origins and life of gipsies, visiting India twice. He collected 123 gipsy tales, 80 mythological traditions and 62 folk songs of the gipsies. Dr. Elysseff, his translator, has done a great service to gipsology by making the results of Kounavine's researches available to scholars who could not read Russian. Dr. Elysseff says: "In his (Kounavine's) conversations with the most notable representatives of the intelligent class of gipsies he was seized with the idea that in the national recollections of these, people there were probably preserved rich treasures of historical and ethnographical facts, and that the meaning and significance of much of their strange

metaphors and inexplicable rites had already been lost." Kounavine met the gipsies of Germany and Austria also and learnt the gipsy languages for five years. He visited Europe, the Arab countries, Kurdistan and Iran. As mentioned above, he was also in India, spending two years in studying the nomadic tribes of upper Hindustan and the Deccan. He spent ten more years in Caucasus, Kurdistan, Ural mountains, central Asia and Turan. He revisited India and the ranges of the Himalayas.

It was in the gipsy camps of the East and Asia Minor that he made his vast notes on gipsy traditions, ritual songs and mythology. Tales constitute the greatest part of his materials and most of them display common Aryan ideas. In many details they are allied to the kindred production of the other people of the great Indo-Aryan family.

In the ancient legends the mythological elements assert themselves the most strongly, and the characteristic features of the Hindu mythology are so evident that even the names to be met with in these tales recall the analogous divinities of the Hindu theogony.

Some of these are: Baramy (Brahma), Jandra (Indra), Laki (Lakshmi), Mata Prithvi, (Mother Earth). Even the secondary names of the primitive mythology of the gipsies remind us of the analogous names of the divination of the religion of the Hindus and of Zoroaster. The gipsy names of Davanni (good spirits) and More (evil spirits) are likewise etymologically akin to the Sanskrit Deva and to the common Aryan root Mara which denotes every being that is wicked and hostile to man. One of the tales runs as follows:

*The Tale of a Great Sage*

In the beginning of all things, the great Baramy (Brahma, the chief proto-divinity of the gipsies) com-

manded his daughter Mata (Prithvi) to marry the radiant Lakipadi (very probably analogous to Hindu Lokapala, the guardian of the Universe) Jandra in order that from this marriage might issue all animals and all plants. Mata consented thereto and all kinds of terrestrial herbs, fruits and trees were born from this marriage. Mata ate one of the fruits produced by her, and a swift-footed horse was born therefrom, who went round all the earth. The wicked Pramori coveted this horse, and longed to possess it. He pursued it for a long time, but Baramy himself watched over this animal—the fruit of his daughter.

Pramori, irritated against Baramy, began to do injury to him in all ways, to himself and to his creatures. Presently, he inundated the whole earth, and overwhelmed all herbs, so that none remained as pastures for the horse, and then he burned everything that Baramy (Brahma) had produced. Irritated at the death of his beloved creatures, Baramy, with the help of another god, created from his breath a Devanni (good spirit) and from this last a Rommidevanni, which he invested with the blood and bones of what had been the horse. From the viscera of this horse Baramy created the animals and from its head he made a new horse, which he gave to the Rommi (man) to serve him for ever.

In this admirable tale all the gipsy cosmogony is expressed. The struggle between the principles of good and evil, a struggle upon which the creator of the visible universe depended is perfectly analogous to the struggle between Ormuz and Ahriman in the religion of Zoroaster. The birth of a horse as a fruit eaten by Mata, the life of the divine bearer of thunder, is but a primitive conception of the Hindu cosmogony, according to which the universe was a fruit of the divine couple: Pita Dyaus (Father Heaven) and Mata Prithvi (Mother Earth).

The ancient songs of the gipsies are a storehouse of their primitive mythology, manners and usages. That these songs originally were hymns or prayers expressed in a poetic form is proved by the metaphors and figures of speech used:

"Golden Sun, Eye of the glittering Father Pashivine (very probably from the Hindu name Shiva), cast thy glance on our camp and on our horse, our tents, our wives and our children! Let thine arrows awaken the Earth from its cold slumber; may she as a mother bring forth fertile gifts! King of the immeasurable Heaven flashing with light, who hath created Heaven and Earth, Lord who piercest the Earth and the water! Thou dost not hear my prayer, thou seest not my sorrowful face."

Another prayer goes as follows: "Khakhava Baramy (Bhagwan Brahma), the All Powerful, Davanni, the Most High, Send unto us thy succulent herbs, so that the horses of thy children may revel in the rich pasture! Brahma hidden in Omoni (Om)! Thou reflect thyself as a ray of sunlight in the depths of the earth created by you."

Are not these typical Vedic prayers of Aryan shepherds ? Dr. Elysseff quotes further hymns:

"In Omoni (Om) is thy body and thy mighty word. Say, O Father of the Universe, who it is that has become guilty before thee that the Sun is hidden in the abysses of the waters and no more illuminates the darkened earth."

"It is in thee, the omnipotent Om, who hast created the Universe by the mighty word—it is in thee, Omoni, that Brahma reposes, in thee reposes Shiva, the golden eye of the father, in thee the shining stars, in thee, through all ages beams the pale-faced moon, lighting the world of sorrows and gloom." (The commentator says: The Gipsy Baramy

like the Hindu Brahma-Para Brahma is seen in the proto-divinity Omoni—the eternal word, a transfiguration of Brahma—in whom he is contained just as Brahma is in the Triune (Trimurthi). In Omoni is hidden his corporeal and inert substance, as well as potential dynamic substance. It is his word which has created the Universe."

And a prayer to Agni:

"Biss, Biss, joyous and radiant, send us happiness, songs to our dark-eyed daughters, and dance and laughter to our young men. Wreath your curls of black hair with red flowers. He takes delight, the joyous Biss, he takes delight in dance and in mirth."

"Fire, who punishest the evil-doer, who hatest falsehood, who scorchest the impure, thou destroyest offenders; thy flame devourest the earth. Devour man if he says what is not true, if he thinks a lie and if he acts deceitfully."

In these incantations, which a gipsy sorcerer always pronounces facing the burning hearth, is expressed all the character, all the worth, of fire—a divinity of the primitive mythology of the gipsies. Fire to them was always a divinity equal to the Sun, and not yielding to Indra himself in power and importance.

Here is another prayer addressed to Goddess Laki, (Lakshmi or Sri):

"Thou art the mother of every living creature and distributor of good. Thou dost according to thy wisdom in destroying what is useless or what has lived its destined time. By thy wisdom thou makest the Earth regenerate all that is new. Thou dost not seek the death of anyone for thou art benefactress of mankind."

M. Kounavine's conclusions are that the gipsies are undoubtedly emigrants from Hindustan, the mother-country

of the Aryan peoples, to which gipsies belong beyond dispute, which is proved by their language, their manners, and even by their anthropological types. Kopernicki having compared gipsy and Hindu skulls has found few differences and many resemblances between them. Topinard is of the same view. He believed gipsies are outcastes from various Hindu castes—high and low, and their tongue is a mixture of many languages of central and western areas, with the kindred speech of neo-Hindus.

The scholars have not been unanimous about the date of migration of the gipsies. It is believed that the migration commenced before the Christian era and went on for some centuries. The essence of the religious beliefs and ideas of the gipsies is based upon pantheistic principles, but their pantheism combines, in a strange fashion, the Hindu idealism with the Egyptian realism and the Zend dualism. It is a mixture of many religions practised by the people of Europe and Asia having at bottom the Hindu cosmic ideas.

## CHAPTER XIII

# GIPSIES IN BRITAIN

30,000 Gipsies in Britain—Their Occupations—From Horse-trading to Car-dealing—Wife Main Supporter—Taboos—Death Customs—Marriage and Morals—Trading Rules—Tribal Justice—Through English Eyes—Failure of Henry VIII—Sense of Corporate Duty—Interest in Genealogy—'We Feel Caged In'—Private Passwords—Unteachable—Real and Fake Gipsies—Fear of Authority—All They Want Is to Be Left Alone.

THERE ARE about 30,000 gipsies in Britain. It is supposed that the gipsies arrived there during the second part of the fifteenth century. The first reference to gipsies occurs in Scotland and belongs to the year 1505, although the exact date of the arrival of the first gipsies in Scotland is not known. According to tradition they were already there during the years 1452-1460. Again in 1505, they are mentioned in a letter of James IV of Scotland to the King of Denmark "to commend Anthony Gagino, a lörd of Little Egypt" who was on a "pilgrimage through the Christian world, undertaken at the command of the Apostolic See".

Definite evidence about the wanderings of the British gipsies is wanting. The authorities at first had nothing against their nomadic ways. Most British gipsies, therefore, are still nomad or half-sedentary. In a general way, however, it appears that the gipsies in Great Britain only wander during the warm months as is the habit today with almost all gipsies. During winter, they settle down and even send their children to school. During the last century, 'van-missions' were founded which worked among the vagrants of the country and also managed to convert a few gipsies.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the trades and occupations noted among the British gipsies are kettle-mending, chair-mending, painting of carts and vans, making of baskets and safety-pins, hawking, flower-selling and grinding. In Wales, gipsy smiths working in gold, lead, and silver have been noted. Among Scottish gipsies there are potters and in England there are bell-hangers. Many British gipsies have been, of course, horse-dealers, and now they also deal in old cars.

The wife was, and probably still is, the main supporter of the family and economically independent of her husband. The position of the women, however, is greatly complicated by various taboos imposed on them. Mr. Thompson in his study on "The Uncleanness of Women among English Gipsies" gives a full account of it. Here these rules can find only summary mention.

Among English gipsies, women are considered unclean and for this reason there are several taboos against them. To begin with, there are regulations concerning the deportment of women. In the presence of men they are not allowed to sit with their legs stretched out. They must take care that they are not heard by men speaking together about sexual matters. They must take care not to touch the men with their skirts; when preparing food they are obliged to wear a special white apron; their hawking apron is changed for another as soon as they are back in camp. The fear of defilement forbids contact between women's linen and that of the men, and a man will not touch women's clothes; women's linen is even carried in a special bag for that purpose.

A woman preparing food has to take care not to defile it with her clothes or in any other way; she is not allowed to touch red meat and it is forbidden for her to eat it during

menstruation and after childbirth. She may not speak about menstruation and during its periods she has to take special precautions not to contaminate others. Great care has to be taken in the use of crockery. It is also possible that even without touching a thing women may have a defiling influence. Thus, it is forbidden for them to step over food and water. Even the water out of a water-pipe may become defiled by a woman stepping over it. There have been similar rules in Greece and Africa.

Children are not considered defiling or in danger of becoming defiled. No distinction is made betwen the sexes until the boys become 'men' at about 10 to 13 years of age and thus become susceptible to defilement, while the girls become 'women' (and unclean) at their first menstruation.

The English gipsies love their children very dearly and have many of them. Their health is often very precarious as may be seen from a Scottish report where it is stated that 216 per 1,000 tinkers' children under five years of age die as compared with 99 per 1,000 Scottish children of the same age.

The gipsy children grow up unchecked and not much is done for their education. By the Children's Act 1908 their parents are obliged to take care not to hinder their children when over five years of age from receiving "efficient elementary education". In a report, dated 1932, it is stated that gipsy children show 'eagerness' to attend school and that their parents desire them to go to school, which is in marked contrast to the case of vagrants' children.

Among the English gipsies death customs are governed by fear of the spirits of the dead and designed to protect themselves against ghosts. Here again, Mr. Thompson has made such a detailed study of the subject that only outlines of these practices need be considered now.

At death the tent or van in which the body lies is vacated in most cases, or the corpse is laid in a special death tent where at times it is exposed to the mourners and other visitors. Often watch is kept over the body, generally by elderly women, until it is buried, whilst lights are burned besides it. The latter custom is a well-known Christian practice.

As a rule, the body is prepared and laid out with arms straight down by non-gipsies, sometimes in accordance with the instructions of the relatives of the deceased. In olden days, the body used to be fully clothed and it is occasionally so even today. The best clothes of the deceased are taken for this purpose; a very sick man would often dress himself before dying in order that others need not touch him after death.

Mixed marriages, although there is still strong opposition to them in some gipsy families, are becoming more frequent as time goes on. That formerly a mixed marriage was rare was not due, in the first place, to taboos against such unions but to the low place in society which the gipsies held and the weight of public opinion directed against them. But already at the end of the eighteenth century mixed marriages were no longer very rare.

A girl's chastity is well guarded, and to prove this, a virginity test was common among some gipsies formerly. Among Scottish gipsies, after the marriage was concluded, the bride retired with her husband and later some witnesses visited them to convince themselves of the bride's virginity, and if the examination was satisfactory the bride received a present. Among English gipsies the wearing of a virginal girdle still prevails.

Any advantage taken of an unmarried girl implies the heaviest punishment. At the same time, prostitution is severely punished. In olden times, it is said, such persons

were buried alive; in any case they were excluded from the tribes. Punishment for adultery by a woman formerly used to take the form of cutting off her cheek, slitting her nose, rending her clothes at the hips, or even exposing in the nude. These punishments are disappearing.

During the last century, according to Simson, in Scotland a divorced gipsy woman was not allowed to have further intercourse; non-observance of this law was severely punished, in some cases even with death.

Payment of a debt to a gipsy must be made at a time and at a place determined beforehand. According to Crabb, a gipsy who did not meet his contract was obliged to pay twice the amount owed or to repay it by way of actual labour for the creditor; Borrow states that the punishment for it was expulsion. Another rule observed among the English gipsies is that one gipsy has to help another when in need through sickness, imprisonment, or bereavement and it appears that this rule is extended also to friendly non-gipsies. A gipsy must tell the truth to another gipsy. This is another rule observed among the gipsies, just as a gipsy may not cheat another gipsy, for example by selling a stolen horse, although such action may eventually be permitted if it takes place at a considerable distance from the scene of the theft.

Violation of the uncleanness taboos makes a gipsy unclean himself. 'He must bring his own glass and plate and may not touch others'. The severity of the penalties for breaking the traditional rules is gradually diminishing. Today expulsion is the heaviest punishment that the gipsy society can inflict on its members.

Many gipsy trials have been noted in England. In one case, no women were allowed; in another, women were

present at the trial. The trial of Jacob (Lee?) in 1842 at Bolton's Bench (Lyndhurst) was held in the presence of three to four hundred gipsies. The accused stood in the middle of a ring formed by the "King of the Gypsies and the patriarchs of the different tribes"; a second circle was formed by the men belonging to the tribes; and a third circle was composed of the women. At this trial, it was the "King" who pronounced the verdict and spat at the culprit's face. It is very probable that the "King" and the "patriarchs" together constituted the tribunal.

At another trial, held in the last century, women were also present. A gipsy was accused of having stolen from another member of the tribe and in the first instance he admitted his guilt, denying it, however, at the trial itself. In the case of this trial it appears that the president of the tribunal had very little power, and the jury moreover was constituted by all adults because everyone was permitted to express his opinion as to the guilt of the accused, while the accused could not be punished unless a unanimous verdict was given. To determine guilt, an accused was and is, often, made to swear an oath of innocence in the presence of others. This is done on Bible or on a loaf of bread. The lack of real authority of a gipsy "king" or leader who may act as a judge makes gipsy jurisdiction very difficult because only when the two opposing parties can agree upon the personage who should act as justice can a trial be held. On the other hand, it has been noted that jurisdiction was affected by a tribunal or a jury composed of the heads of the families.

In case of personal quarrels it has been observed that among some gipsies (Woods) the two opponents fight it out on a field under the supervision of referees. The case is considered closed only after they have shaken hands.

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Here is a picture of gipsies in England seen through English eyes. It is an account which has been published in a leading newspaper of London :

There are probably between 20,000 and 30,000 persons of predominantly Romany blood in this country—nobody knows for certain—and a large proportion of them still travel the roads in the summer and settle in semi-permanent quarters for the winter. Most of them, as they will admit under close questioning, feel themselves to be a people apart, divided from the Gorgios (white people) by a gulf they cannot define and do not particularly want to bridge. Apart from differences in blood and temperament, the strain of the enmity which they have generally endured in this country since their arrival in the early sixteenth century has forced them to withdraw behind a self-erected psychological barrier.

Beneath their queer air of separateness—exemplified by the savage squabbles gipsy women unashamedly conduct among themselves in the middle of a busy street—lies the fear of many generations. During the reign of Henry VIII all gipsies were ordered to leave the country within sixteen days on pain of death. In the benevolent Victorian decades the police dealt with them so thoroughly that George Borrow wrote in *Romano Lavolil :* "Gipsydom is declining and its

days are numbered. There is a force abroad which is doomed to destroy it—the rural police." For not even at the height of their artistic appeal did the gipsies enjoy the reputation of scrupulous attention to legalities.

To some extent they manage to live above the law to this day. Not every young man does his National Service. Not every casual worker ("casualty labourer" is how many gipsies describe themselves) declares his income. Not every child, by any means, goes regularly to school. A gipsy encampment will still go to extraordinary lengths to protect one of its members against the attention of the police, or to warn other gipsies in the neighbourhood if trouble is on the way. Finding a wanted gipsy is almost as hard as ever.

The sense of corporate duty among them, for legal as well as illegitimate purposes, is remarkable. The entire population of a gipsy encampment in Hertfordshire, men, women, and children, was recently seen at dead of night dredging a pond for the body of a missing child. Hundreds of gipsies turn out for Romany weddings and funerals, the latter still conducted with elaborate pomp though probably never with the old pagan ceremonial that survived in rare instances until the thirties.

Gipsy interest in Romany genealogy is unflagging. The great family names of English gipsydom—Smith, Boswell, Lee, Stanley, Hearne—are mentioned with respect and declared with pride. The Romany language, though much debased, is still alive, and young men as well as old are proud of their command of it; but as often as not, for some obscure reason of their own, they will deny all knowledge of it to an inquisitive Gorgio.

More gipsies live in houses nowadays—some 50 families spend the winter in Council houses at Wimbledon—but the

instinct of the nomad seems unquenchable. One gipsy who has settled down to house life in Waltham Cross "for the sake of his children" admits that if it were not for his family he would "go back to the roads tomorrow." As it is, he prefers to take his morning cup of tea in the garden, and his eldest son, to the justifiable annoyance of a self-sacrific- ing paterfamilias, has already declared his ambition of returning to the gipsy life. "We feel caged in", both men say, and their complaint is the echo of centuries of wandering.

Even the more esoteric gipsy customs, seriously weaken- ed in England during the past half-century, are not quite dead. There are at least two communities of Serbian gipsies in this country whose lives are governed by extraordinarily primitive principles. Their children speak little English, relying upon a combination of Hungarian and Romany. Their old people shun the Gorgios as evil influences. On a wedding night in their encampments a white flag is flown above the bridegroom's caravan if he finds he is blessed with chaste wife, and a black flag if he has been cheated. (And the immigration of such tribes has not entirely ceased, it appears; a band of German gipsy coppersmiths has recently been reported in the London area.) Even true English Romanies still have their secrets. The crossed sticks of their kind are sometimes found where the gipsies have been, giving advice and information to blood-brothers who may be following, and there are still such things as private passwords.

They are a people of superstitions, and their God-fear is singularly superficial. They generally go to church only for weddings, funerals, and baptisms; the last, because they believe an unchristened child cannot be buried in holy ground. Asked what his true beliefs were, one gipsy in the Hampshire hop-fields last summer said: "I don't believe

in God, but I believe in the Blessed Lord because I've seen His photo." Another old Romany lady with a keen eye to the main chance, remarked virtuously to your correspondent: Whenever I makes myself a cup of tea, kind gentleman, I looks up to Heaven and I says "Very much obliged to yer."

The gipsies in England, with a few notable exceptions, are all illiterate, and many of them evidently unteachable by normal methods. Their mastery of the English language is limited and muffled ("desperate crossings" is an engaging gipsy malapropism for "pedestrian crossings"), and their know edge of affairs all but non-existent. There are several reasons why the school attendance of gipsy children is something less than intermittent. First, most gipsy families are on the road for part of the year. Secondly, Romany parents are often reluctant to allow their children to learn to read and write in case it later breeds shame of their gipsy origins. Finally, many schools are in any case not keen to see the laws enforced because of the prejudice against gipsies that exists among Gorgio parents.

This prejudice has grown since the war and is making life difficult for the Romany. It is founded largely on misunderstanding. Most people would like the real gipsy, if only they knew him; he is simple and reasonably clean, and in these days of robbery with violence even his notorious sleight-of-hand seems forgivable. But the gipsies have always suffered from the activities of the large numbers of undesirables who lead a debased or corrupted Romany life. Mumpers or "poshrats" they used to be called and they are drawn now, as they were in the seventeenth century, from the dregs of the urban population. In the past ten years this feckless community has been joined, in its camps of shacks and old buses, by hundreds of unfortunates who can find nowhere better to live. Of the estimated 100,000

"travellers" on the roads of England, a good two-thirds have no Romany blood at all, and many of the traditional gipsy winter camping sites (Belvodere Marshes in Kent are an unpleasant example) are swarming with unhappy outcasts of the housing shortage.

The Romany people have suffered bitterly for this situation, for thanks partly to gipsy secretiveness and partly to frequent intermarriage with Gorgios, few English people are able to differentiate between gipsies and mumpers, and most believe them all to be equally dirty and dishonest. When a laundry in a Home County's town recently agreed to collect washing from a camp of more or less true Romanies, the tenants of a local council estate threatened to withdraw their custom. Schools with gipsy pupils sometimes put them into a special class on the insistence of Gorgio parents. Earlier this year Lady Hart-Dyke, of Lullingstone Castle, suggested the settlement of a number of true gipsies on her estate, a petition bearing 495 signatures of disapproval and only eight of approval was presented to the local authorities, and the scheme was abandoned.

The gipsies have also, perhaps, lost caste because they are less affluent than they were 50 years ago. The demand has fallen for their traditional skills, such as tin-smithing and horse-judging, and most of them are now hawkers or casual labourers. Sometimes their inherited fear of authority is disgracefully exploited in money matters. Your correspondent visited one encampment consisting of a piece of waste land covered with gravel, surrounded by a wall, and supplied with a water tap; for the privilege of parking their own homes on this bleak site the gipsies pay a rent of £1 a week for each caravan.

Most gipsies ask for no more than to be left alone, but those few who are politically articulate seem to want two

things of Government, whether local or national: the provision of winter camping sites, with water and sanitation, for which they will pay a reasonable rent; and somewhere to camp on the outskirts of most big towns, where they can rest on their travels without fear of police, landlord, or disgruntled resident.*

The gipsies in England are afraid of the police because it enforces laws very severely. The following poem represents the feelings of the gipsies:

## Where There Isn't Police

*(Talk between two Gipsies)*

"What is luck for the day?" I asked and he said, "very
bad luck again to me."
It is very bad luck, that never will cease and all along
these here police.
When I am sound asleep in our little camp,
The pigs come down and they make us tramp;
They roots me and I get no peace;
For it's allen 'move on!' with them, ere police
If my missus gets in a house, you know,
To tell a bit of fortune or so
They scare her almost to her decease,
For they're natural devils, is their police.
I had fellow preaching to me,
All this is land of liberty;
But I tells him my liberty is peace,
And there is none o' that there, where you has police.
Oh, I had enough o' this land I say,
With all its Lords and parsons and, sitch as they say,
And it is over the water I goes like geese,

*From *The Times*, London.

To a land where there isn't no police.
There you can tell a fortune or so;
There you can clear out the things, you know;
There you are free as the blowing breeze:
Fearlessly from them vile police.
The Merican land, I think may hap,
Is just the spot for a Romany chap;
For from all I hear, there they lives at peace,
As if the people don't care for no police.

C. G. LELAND

## CHAPTER XIV

# BEARERS OF CULTURE

**What They Gave to Yugoslavia—Expert Mechanics—Superior Craftsmen—Masters of Design—Elegant Products—Their Influence.**

THE GIPSIES? Yes, they are bearers of culture*. They brought to us some products which are today universally spread in our nation.

The gipsies could have arrived in Serbia around the middle of the fourteenth century. The Serbs had around the towns their own trades and crafts which were for them the main occupation. Some of these are mentioned in our annals of that time about villages. The villagers themselves, besides pursuing agriculture and cattle-breeding as their main occupations, made some articles from iron and wood for their domestic needs.

This was the general environment into which the gipsies came. They appeared as expert craftsmen for certain jobs such as blacksmithy and carpentry. They were carriers of a tradition of craftsmanship. Even today the nation calls them 'majstors' (experts). Thrown into the ups and downs of destiny, unused to any other work, they carried on in their crafts and offered the products they made from place to place at very small prices for old clothes, for a handful of flour, for a hen, for a handful of wool only to feed themselves and clothe themselves—the same as they did in later periods. The effect of the cheap products offered by the

*An article published in the eight-volume Serbian Encyclopædia. It has been translated by Shri K. N. S. Sharma, who worked in the Indian Embassy in Belgrade, and is now in the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs.

gipsies was that our people (the Yugoslavs) in the villages began to abandon their crafts, since the products could be obtained from the gipsies so easily. Perhaps the gipsy products, being the products of experts, were better than the ones produced by the village craftsmen who were only ordinary farmers. Little by little, the gipsies became our village craftsmen for all requirements manufactured from iron and from wood.

The names of the village blacksmiths in the middle ages show that they were Serbs. They satisfied the requirements of all the village people in respect of hardware. When the gipsies appeared on the scene with their cheap forged wares, the Serbian blacksmiths gradually made way for the gipsies. In many parts, this profession, little by little, became an exclusively gipsy affair. The gipsies, being poor and being satisfied with the little that they could get, went from village to village satisfying the local requirement for forged goods. In villages where the requirements were bigger, one or two gipsy families permanently settled down to practise their crafts. The villagers very happily accepted them and in some places kept them as their permanent village employees. In Montenegro, the villagers bargained with a gipsy so that they gave him ten litres of maize annually and fuel and the gipsy repaired the blades for the whole year, according to an agreement. They were responsible for shoeing of horses and cattle. For Rijicka Nahija (name of a place) we have even documents on this trade. There the municipal committee itself chooses the blacksmith, puts him up in a municipal committee house which is small and low, buys for him the anvil and nails and other bigger and dearer implements. For a year's blacksmithy every house gives the blacksmith one 'bagas' (a measure) and any house which has more work gives him an extra one-third 'bagas' of flour. This practice is called Uljetica. Everyone is obliged to pay him accord-

ing to the terms of the Uljetica. Under Uljetica the blacksmith is obliged to render service to all the citizens with any or all of the implements he has. If anyone wants from him any services which are not in the agreement then he has to pay specially for these. In Skopska, Montenegro, the gipsy is paid for sharpening of axes and other such services at the rate of annually one 'sinik' of maize or as otherwise agreed upon.

Blacksmithy among the Serbian villagers remained a profession only in exceptional cases—in big communes. Apart from this it completely disappeared. The only thing that remained of the old Serbian blacksmith was the surname "Kavacevic" (which literally means the son of a blacksmith) which is carried by their documents.

What is important to note is that wherever the gipsies and their products could reach, they partly or completely supplanted the local products. Brought from outside, these products were of a different shape from those which the Serbains themselves made. Today the "gipsy nails", the "gipsy carding machine", the "gipsy drills" and similar things are well known. These things are always referred to as such to distinguish them from those which are not gipsy in origin. These purely indigenous products do not carry the adjective "gipsy". What is more important, many of the gipsy designs provide the guiding formulæ for the Serbian blacksmiths—such as remain—and they make nails, carding combs, etc in the designs introduced by gipsies. Even today, the people in many villages, both in the house and in the field, use gipsy products or products made in the gipsy manner.

What is true of iron is also true of wood-troughs, spoons, spindles, baskets and some other things which are even today made for the most part by gipsies.

The villagers, before the arrival of the gipsies, had troughs. Beside the fountains and wells there were big, clumsy, heavy troughs, difficult to move, which were made from hollowed-out wood in which clothes were washed and from which cattle drank water, and which the villagers themselves made. The gipsies brought into our nation their handy, light and movable "gipsy troughs". Although these did not entirely replace the national trough, they were adopted everywhere.

The production of the gipsy troughs passed from the gipsies to the Serbs. In Uzica (a place) the villagers belonging to the neighbourhood of Posega bring wooden troughs to sell. These are bought by the people for salting meat, for kneading bread and storing milk. These troughs are mostly made by families who learnt to make them from the gipsies roughly fifty years ago. The same holds true for the wooden spoon which were used at the time and which were replaced by more elegant gipsy products.

As is evident from all that has been said before, the gipsies not only brought into our nation their products but those products had great influence on similar national products. In some places the gipsy products partially supplanted the local products of iron and wood, and in some places completely replaced them.

## CHAPTER XV

# THE INTRICACIES OF GIPSY SPEECH

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Special View of Art—Different in Russia—The Problem of Derivation—Words Freely Borrowed, But Not Assimilated—Perils of Translation—Prerequisites in Analysing Romany Texts—Every Gipsy is Bilingual.

ROMANY, considered in the sum of its dialects, is essentially a spoken language. There actually exist in Europe a score of Romany forms of speech. One could easily classify them into two groups: (a) the Northern dialects, i.e. the speech of the Baltic countries, and of Poland and Western Russia, and (b) the speech of the South, covering the rest of Europe and even of North and South America. The link between these two groups is provided by the West German and Baltic Romany dialects.

Apart from some collections of songs and folk tales, we know of no literary activity among the Southern Romanies. In Western Poland, if one judges according to the work on Polish gipsies by J. Ficowski, and in the Baltic countries, every kind of artistic activity—music, dancing and poetry—belongs only to individual gipsies. They would not dream of offering their gipsy art to the public at large, for it is regarded as something sacred. Further, every artistic production is something unique in the conception of a Baltic gipsy, and must not be copied. Each artist improvises and is averse to performing or reciting a work which he has not himself created. This conception of art necessarily prevents any written preservation of artistic creations.

In Russia it is different. From the end of the nineteenth century one finds signs of the complete integration of the gipsy in Russian society. In his work *The Serfs of the Danubian Principalities,* published in Paris in 1855, Poissonier, professor at the French Institute of Bucharest, compares the sad lot of the gipsies enslaved by the Roumanian Boyards (nobility) with that of the Russian gipsies. He writes: "The Russian gipsies sometimes occupy a high level in the social scale. Some rival the upper Muscovite nobility by their appearance as well as by their intellectual qualities....." But it is especially since the years 1927-1930, when some gipsy literary circles were created and two gipsy theatres were started, one at Moscow and the other at Leningrad, that artistic and literary life has taken a unique impetus in gispy history. However, to judge by the books written in the years 1930-1940 which I have just received from Moscow, it seems to me that all this literary activity has done more harm than good to the development of the Russian Romany by destroying his natural genius. The reason for this is that the writers are Russians or de-gipsified gipsies. The best of these have almost insurmountable difficulties to face in common with all translators of a new language: *i.e.* the problem of derivation and of borrowing.

The importance of derivation changes from one part of the language to another. Thus the verb (in Romany) is very flexible and alive. There is, in fact, no word which cannot become a verb.

*e.g.*—

*angil*—forward
*m'angilov, m'angild'om*—I go forward
*angidyr*—more forward
*m'angild' om*—I go more forward

Adjectival derivation is still richer in suffixes and as vivid as that of the verb.

*bax*—lucky *bastalo*—lucky.
*guru*—beef *guruvana*—bovine

Noun derivation, except for some suffixes, is far from being as productive, for the following reasons:

(a) The bilingualism of the Romanies. Indeed, it is more natural to use a word already in existence in another language which one knows as well as one's own, than to create a new one. This is the law of least effort.

(b) One adopts a new article with its name.

*e.g.*—*Pulgo*=carriage *galstuko*=tie
cf. French : mixer, blue jeans, duffle-coat

*Borrowed Words and Constructions:* We shall first deal with borrowed words or vocabulary. These are found as much in the spoken Romany as in the written language, the only evidence of the latter being some translations of the gospels in different dialects and the Russian Romany which one is now compelled to deem a literary language.

In Romany, the structure of the word borrowed allows us to give it a precise definition: a borrowed word is a word whose structure is different from that of the Romany word. The law of the original words and derived words is as follows:

For nouns in the original Romany : (a) consonant theme—CVC or (rarely) CCVC
(b) vowel theme—CVCV

*e.g.* (*a*) *gin*—number; *gov*—oats; *gov*—village
*drab*—doctor; *trin*—three; *dad*—father
(*b*) *maro*—read; *zuly*—woman, *desto*—stick

*For Derived Nouns:* Words contain several syllables, sometimes as many as four. One also finds among them abstract nouns which are accentuated on the first syllable, (suffix—*ma*).

*e.g. pin 'c' kiripie*—to make the acquaintance of, i.e. knowledge. *lolyma*—redness.

*For Adjectives in Original Romany* : The pattern is *CVCV* or *CVCV*
*e.g.* lolo, loly=red grastono=equine

*Nouns and Adjectives of Foreign Origin :* These invariably terminate, whatever be the number of their syllables, in *-o* and in *-i* unaccented for the masculine, and in *-a* unac cented for the feminine.

*e.g.* karako—crow: *baba*—grandmother; *kafa*—coffee

The employment of these borrowed words by the gipsies is quite conscious. One can observe the ease with which they pass from a borrowed word, which is habitual to them, to that of the one whom they are addressing when the latter is a gipsy who belongs to another tribe. For instance, the Kelderari, gipsies of Roumanian origin, who generally know several languages, instinctively speak to me, and I myself, in speaking with the Sintis or the Manus, both German gipsies, pass automatically to German or French borrowed words, for they do not understand the Slavonic languages. In the same family it is customary to use borrowed words from several countries. For instance, on returning from school and discussing science together, my brother and I would amplify our Romany with Lettish words, whilst with our mother we used no Lettish words at all, as she did not understand them.

Hence, the belief that people speak spontaneously and without reflection seems to us true only to a limited extent. It is only necessary that an individual finds himself in unfamiliar surroundings for him to become aware of those elements of his vocabulary which he must modify. This, which is true for all, is particularly true for the Romany.

It seems to me that the unaccented *-o* and *-a* come from the Greek noun endings *-os* and *-a* for masculine and feminine, respectively. In fact, even the most de-gipsified dialects possess in their vocabulary Greek words which have been borrowed during their long period in Greece. Further, certain dialects like those of the Finns and of the Welsh actually distinguish words of foreign origin by the terminal *-os* unaccented.

The history of the gipsies can, to a certain degree, explain to us their reluctance to introduce these foreign words into their proper language. Persecuted down the centuries, the Romanies segregated themselves and wished to have nothing to do with those Gringos who harried them. They consistently reject everything that comes from that Western civilisation which has not accepted them, and they mark with a special sign the words which willy-nilly they have to borrow. Moreover, as in every other language, persons who make incorrect use of such borrowed words are exposed to ridicule.

But beside these borrowed words, we find in the written Romany, and in that only, another type of borrowing—that of *structure and syntax*. It is because these written texts are mostly translations, or because the writers were not true Romanies and did not know the language sufficiently that these manuscripts are in a language which is distorted in its structure. Indeed, it would be entirely unrecognised by a Romany, unless he happened to know the language under the influence of which the author had come.

Leimanis, whom I knew before leaving Lithuania, and who spoke excellent Romany, leaves us a disappointing translation of the Gospel of John. Imitating the Russian or Lithuanian text, he replaces the Romany possessive adjective by the Balto-Slavic active participle. Again, he seems no longer to know the type of infinitive that is generally used in European Romany, namely the present tense, preceded by the prefix *te-*. The folk stories of the same dialect, collected by Paul Ariste, professor at the University of Tartue, which I have just received, gives clear evidence that the spoken Romany of the western Baltic does not correspond to that of the translation of the Gospel.

The work of Germano, a Russian versifier writing in Romany, is for the most part nothing more than Russian dressed up in Romany words. To take examples only from

his best known work, *Ganka C'amba,* I shall quote the following expression which shows where his Russianisms and his non-gipsy expressions lead: *mek joj rakirla* "What says she !"

In European Romany one would have said *mera-kirel joj ;* Germano here replaces the Romany subjunctive by a periphrasis as in Russian. In a general way, he seems to ignore the Romany subjunctive and optative.

Upon the texts in Southern dialects, published by the Gipsy Lore Society, we should not be able to pass so firm an opinion. The view of a Romany, Kalderari, a resident of France, whose texts have appeared in the Journal of the G.L.S. inclines us, however, to a measure of caution. Indeed, on his own admission, these texts had been written first in French and then translated into Romany.

If we cast stones at these writers for having so distorted the Romany language, it is necessary to recognise that they found themselves faced by problems difficult to solve, for to borrow words was for them a primary necessity, not a luxury as in an evolved language like French or Russian. It is nonetheless true that the harm which they have done to the Romany language is very great for it does not end there. Self-taught translators and foreigners disfigure the page, and then the grammarians arrive and from these "texts" establish the "rules" of Romany.

Moreover, to a certain extent, these difficulties can be overcome since Papusa, who to our knowledge is the only Romany poet worth the name, has been able to avoid these pitfalls. Actually, his language, apart from some defects, is similar to the language spoken by the Northern Romanies.

How then can one find a criterion to guide the linguist in his analysis of a Romany text ? The first requisite which will be indispensable to him is a deep knowledge of the

dialect in which the text is written; but also a good general acquaintance with all the other dialects and the languages of the countries in which these dialects are spoken, in order to be able to disentangle that which, from a point of view of construction, is Romany and which is not. It is only by comparing with the materials taken from life and in no way spoiled by translation that we can with assurance distinguish that which, in each Romany form of language, is authentically of Romany construction. What one must ask the person one is speaking to is: "Tell me a story or tell me your life" and not "How do you say so and so?", a phrase which one meets unfortunately on the lips of many investigators.

It is nonetheless true that the need for borrowed words present to the writer problems which never existed before the Romany needed to write. And we may ask whether the intervention of linguists is possible or necessary.

It seems to me that those who cannot write Romany without distorting it can easily, if they find it necessary to write, do so in their second language since every Romany is necessarily bilingual.

## CHAPTER XVI

# GIPSIES IN SWEDEN

Arrival from Scotland—Only Eight Families Originally in Country—Mixed Marriages on the Increase—Sources of Livelihood—Women Retain Traditional Dress—'Heart in Hand'—Own Courts—Marriages Arranged—Childlessness Regarded as a Curse—Death an Occasion for Forgiveness—A Grateful Race.

IN THE 1780's some German scientists had found such great similarities between the language of the gipsies and certain Indian dialects that they ventured to claim that the original home of the gipsies must have been India. This theory was fully confirmed in the 1840's when the German philologist A. F. Pott published his epochal work *Die Zigeuner in Europe and Asien* (The Gipsies in Europe and Asia), in which he established the affinity of the gipsy language with Sanskrit and with the dialects of northern India. Some decades later the philologist Franz Miklosich thought that he could point to certain similarities between the European gipsy dialects and languages in Dardistan and Kafiristan in north-west of India.

Miklosich was of the opinion that the gipsy immigration from India could not have taken place earlier than A.D. 1000. The first gipsy bands appeared in south-eastern Europe in the fourteenth century, and then they rapidly spread. In the beginning of the fifteenth century they were reported in Germany, France and Italy. At the end of the century they appeared in Spain and soon afterwards also in England.

The first trustworthy evidence about gipsies in Sweden dates from 1512, and they were supposed to have come from

A Banjara matron of South India

**A tribal girl from Rajasthan**

A Gujjar girl, also from Kashmir

**Lambani women from Mysore**

Scotland. Since then gipsy bands have wandered into and out of Sweden. In 1914 gipsy immigration into Sweden was forbidden. At that time there were about 200 gipsies in Sweden, and when they learnt that they would not be allowed to come back if they left the country, they chose to stay, the more willingly so, as the First World War put a stop to their free wanderings in Europe.

The ban on immigration was withdrawn in 1954. Since 1914 these gipsies have stayed in Sweden and the original 200 have increased to 740 (May 1, 1955), including children from mixed marriages. All these are the descendants of eight family groups that immigrated into Sweden about the turn of the century. These eight family groups have the following names: Bolotjogoni, Jelleschti, Govaneschti, Tjurconi, Bombeschti, Hack, Jantjeschti and Fynfyrojeschti.

Between themselves the gipsies seldom use family names but prefer special gipsy names or nick-names—for men: Kila, Pika, Bango, Krischka, Milosch, Steyo, Savka, Bomba, etc., and for women: Zaga, Solomia, Tutena, Busch, Bolka, Saliska, Nina, Berbeck, etc.

During the 40 years when immigration was banned, practically no new bands came into the country. The result is that Swedish gipsies are all related to each other, having always married within their own ranks. The first mixed marriages, however, came in the 1920's but were strongly opposed by the other gipsies. But during the last decade there have been many mixed marriages, mostly between gipsies and Swedish women. In the spring of 1955 there lived in Sweden 152 half gipsies, five three-quarter gipsies, 19 quarter gipsies and four one-eighth gipsies. Of a total population of 740 individuals the pure gipsies were 560 or 75.7 per cent. In 1943 they were 86 per cent.

When immigrating the gipsies arrived in bands, as a rule consisting of only one family group. The head of the group was the father, his authority based on the fact of his being the eldest male. He was thus not a selected chief of the clan and he always asked his wife for advice and permitted the grown-up sons to have their say in matters of importance. Only when the band through marriages and birth of children had grown big, at first the eldest son and then others separated from the group. The youngest son and his wife finally took care of the old couple until their death.

More than 90 per cent of the Swedish gipsies are *kalderascha* gipsies. They have, for a long time, earned their living mainly as coppersmiths and tinsmiths. *Kalderasch* means coppersmith. Nowadays there is almost no work to be had for coppersmiths in Sweden but many gipsies still make their living as tinsmiths. In 1914 one of the gipsy families started a touring tivoli and others took up the idea, but this kind of entertainment has become out of date.

The traditional sources of income are music and, most of all, fortune-telling, which all gipsy women learn from an early age. Gipsies have also always tried to earn money from collecting all kinds of broken articles, especially pots and pans, which they have resold after having repaired them.

Earlier, the gipsies in Sweden were also known as clever horse-dealers but since 1938 they have switched over to buying and selling second-hand cars.

Living conditions of the Swedish gipsies are still not satisfactory but the authorities are doing much to better their lot. Special surveys have been made and action is being taken to give all children proper schooling. Great

efforts are made to help gipsies settle down in good houses and give them training in different vocations.

The special gipsy culture is, however, bound to disappear, though some of their old habits, customs and traditions are still retained. When the gipsies came to Sweden at the beginning of this century, they—besides their native tongue, Romany—only had a passable knowledge of one of the great European languages. Fynfyrojeschti and Jantjeschti families spoke Russian, others German. mixed with phrases from other European languages. Now, all gipsies in Sweden speak Swedish. With two exceptions, all men have discarded the old traditional costumes, consisting of short pants with stripes, jacket with silver buttons, hat and short top boots. The women have kept their national costumes—long wide skirts in bright colours, blouse and head cloth.

Gipsies do not fraternise with other Swedes, but they are always well informed about each other's whereabouts and utilise every opportunity for visiting relatives and friends. If two gipsies meet unexpectedly, it is considered bad manners to "leave the other where he was found". The meeting must always be celebrated in some way. Strangers are also received in a friendly and tactful manner. Consideration is a word frequently used. The gipsy is spontaneous and open-minded; he "carries his heart in his hand", as they say. The young ones are told to be polite to their elders; children are not allowed to interrupt the talk of grown-up persons, and a woman must keep silent when her husband is talking.

Gipsies have their own rules of justice and their own courts and they very seldom apply to Swedish courts. Either the case is dealt with privately or is taken up at the gipsies' own court. This is called a *kris*.

The wronged party can either summon the *kris* himself or he can go to an older, respected gipsy and ask him to do

it. Two to five men are then summoned from both sides. All must be impartial and wise men, respected by everybody. It is considered a great honour to be appointed to this task.

The summoning party must pay all costs for journey and expenses. When a decision is reached, the loser has to pay. If it is a serious case that is to be judged, a special oath is required, called *solach*. The oath is taken on a cross (often drawn on the ground) or on an image of Christ. It is also very common to take the oath on a grave. The exact wording varies but always implies a promise to tell the truth. If not so they believe, the favourite son, the favourite daughter, the wife or whomever the person concerned loves most, will be struck by illness or death within three, six or nine days, three weeks, six weeks or six months. If nothing happens within this time, the witness has told the truth. The gipsies are fully convinced that perjury will bring the disaster stated in the oath. Sometimes the person who has to swear will name a less beloved relative. In such cases the plaintiff may demand another oath.

The punishment is nowadays confined to fines. Earlier, the guilty party could be excluded from the band or even beaten up. The *kris* always ends in a big celebration.

When a son in a gipsy family is 17 years of age, the parents start looking for a suitable wife. Earlier, even small children could be engaged to be married, if the parents found it advisable. Parents still arrange marriages and the young people as a rule comply with their wishes.

The future wife must, above all, be a chaste and respectable woman, without any adventures with boys. She must be young and know how to dance, sing or play some instrument. She must also be well versed in the duties of a house-

wife. Under no circumstances may she have or have had a contagious disease.

These conditions being fulfilled, parents start bargaining about the cash to be paid for the girl by the father-in-law. The young wife is later on to give him back this money when she has been able to earn it through fortune-telling or in some other way. A marriage celebration earlier used to go on for three days. In the evening of the third day the bride was conducted to her husband with solemn ceremonies. On the morning of the fourth day the old women came and bound the *diklo* on her head as a sign of her new dignity. Nowadays a wedding ceremony is much simpler and many gipsies go to Swedish churches to get married.

Gipsy marriages are as a rule never broken up. Passionate love might be rare but man and wife learn to adjust themselves, and in many cases there are also warm feelings, which, however, are never demonstrated before others. This is considered bad manners.

Divorces are very rare among the gipsies. In May, 1955, the number of divorced gipsies was only nine. One of the main reasons for a divorce is childlessness. The woman who does not give her husband children must be the victim of a curse, or her happiness is bound with another man.

Gipsies are unhappy without children. When a child is born in a gipsy tent, holy water is sprinkled over the mother and the child with the words: "May you have a long life. Now your difficulties are over." "Was it a girl or a boy?" "A girl." *T'avel bachtali te trajil, but borsch hai t'avel sumnakai hai rop.* (We wish her happiness, a long life, gold and silver.)

Nowadays gipsy women go to hospitals for confinement. The babies are always christened within three to six days after the birth. The god-parents are not selected by the parents and anybody can be a god-father or a god-mother. The child is named after the most prominent god-parent and it is considered a great honour to be called upon to give a child one's own name.

Gipsies love life. Death frightens them and suicides are unknown. When a gipsy is seriously ill and death is approaching, as many relatives and friends as possible gather around his bed. There are no ceremonies. The most important thing is that the dying gipsy parts with his relatives and friends without any feelings of revenge or hate. He is expected to say: "May God forgive you." That so many gather around the death-bed is explained by their belief in ghosts. Dead people reappear and have the power of frightening and harming the living. If anybody has not been friendly with the deceased person and is not in time to see him before he dies, he has to go to his grave, sprinkle some water on it and say: *T'avel jerto mandar. Na ker, mango bajo. Delo simas tu sa.* (I forgive you. Do not harm me. I behaved badly towards you.)

As soon as a gipsy breathes his last, all present start crying, and their sorrow is genuine. But another reason for their crying might be that some of their legends maintain that the dead person might have been allowed to come back from death, if only he had been mourned enough. The mourning goes on for three days. Everybody can take food and drink as usual, but for every bottle opened, some of the content should be poured on the ground with the word: *T'avel anglal tuti.* (To your memory.) On the morning of the third day everybody goes out and "pours water cross-wise." This is called pouring water for the dead, *te sores pai anglal mulo.* Water should be poured on a grass-

covered untrodden hill. If anybody dreams of the dead person, he will have to repeat the same procedure.

When gipsies go to buy the coffin for a dead relative, they must go three or six together, and they have to walk cross-wise or in rows of three, *jan ande truschuleste.* No bargaining is allowed. It is an honour for the dead person to have a costly coffin.

A dead gipsy is laid into the coffin, clothed in his or her best, men and women alike. A woman might even take her jewellery with her. The funeral takes place on the fourth day. Nobody is invited, as whcever is invited to a funeral will soon die. The mourners walk in rows of three. Those who have brought flowers throw them on the coffin, saying *Mekav tu Devlesa* (I leave you with God). One of the relatives makes a speech and bids farewell and after that everybody throws some copper coins into the grave. *Alc te putchin tje droma. T'aves jerto.* (This is to pay your way. May you be forgiven.) Or : *Kodola love ka tijudav tuke te tjines tuke so tu kames.* (This money I am throwing to you that you may be able to buy what you want.) This being done, everybody goes away without looking back. To do otherwise is to invite bad luck.

All belongings of the dead person—tents, household goods and clothes—used earlier are to be destroyed, burnt or thrown into running water. Money and valuables are, however, always kept and divided between children and grandchildren.

The place where somebody has died is immediately abandoned by the gipsies and they never return there. But the graves are well kept. Gipsies visiting the grave have to touch the cross or the grave itself and say: *T'aves jerto.* (You are forgiven, or, May you have peace.) One should not come empty-handed. Some water is usually sprinkled on the grave, and if water is not available,

lemonade, beer or aqua-vitæ can be used, depending on what the dead gipsy preferred when alive.

The gipsy is natural as a child. He is grateful for every day of sun and happiness. Whatever will happen also happens. He is a fatalist who knows that God wants good things to happen, but he also knows that not even God rules over fate. One of the most prominent among Swedish gipsies, Johan Demitri-Taikon, said once: "We all have a God, dear friend. Though the three *vurzitori* (goddesses of Destiny) parcelled out our fate and made trees trees, the Swede a Swede and gipsies gipsies, rich and poor, healthy or ill, we are all living, because thus it has been decided. We have to be grateful. It is better to say a good word than a bad one. If you every evening take leave of me, saying: *Del tu O Del latchi riat* (May God give you a good evening), then I can return home safely. No tram will run me over, no naughty kids will harass me—or at least I shall not notice them. That is the effect of a good word, brother. I thank you."

Johan Demitri-Taikon (1879-1950) was one of the greatest story-tellers of the Swedish gipsies. He was at the same time a poet and a dreamer. His stories were the creations of an artist and such artists are rare among any people.

It is, however, only a matter of time when the folklore and poetry of the gipsies will have disappeared altogether. Nowadays, gipsies go to the cinema in the evening, young people have no interest in the stories and songs of their elders, and their wise sayings and funny proverbs meet with no response among the young gipsies with their film idols.

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The article is based on the publication *"The Gipsy Problems"*, Stockholm, 1956.

Additional sources:

1. *Journal of the Gipsy Lore Society*, Third Series, Vol. 26 to Vol. 38.
2. *Study of Gipsy Language*—published by the Norwegian Academy of Science, Oslo.

## CHAPTER XVII

# GIPSIES IN THE NEW WORLD

**Liberal Regulations—Nomadic Urge Revived—Two Main Groups—Increasing Assimilation—No More 'Kings' and 'Queens'—Their Tribunals—Gipsy Musician Interviewed—New Professions Growing Popular.**

AMERICA, like Sweden, is a land where the gipsies are rich. The New World is the land of pioneers and adventurers. Here you meet Punjabi lumbermen who have become millionaires by their hard work. Here you also meet gipsies who drive luxurious cars and whose caravans consist of the latest models of fully furnished homes on wheels. Nowhere do the gipsies prosper as much as in the United States of America, except probably Sweden. They have tremendous opportunities for business. In the vast plains of the United States, they have freedom to camp where they please.

Most of the gipsies in America are descendants of those deported from England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For two hundred years they travelled on horses and bullock-carts, and horse-trading was a paying business besides fortune telling. They were reputed as musicians also. Today the gipsies travel in auto-cars through the country, more especially in California, visiting industrial centres where their business, namely fortune-telling, is most profitable. It looks as though the modern means of transport as well as the liberal regulations concerning wandering have renewed the nomadic spirit of these gipsies. As a rule, they live in tents during summer and in empty shops during winter, staying not longer than a month at the same place.

The gipsies in America can be divided into two main groups, the sedentary and the nomad. The nomad gipsies of America are subdivided into two groups, the small group of the Macvaya and the large group which is generally called Kalderas. Many groups of different origin may be remarked among the sedentary gipsies, so long as they are groups and not just families only. The divergencies among these groups or families are mainly based on differences of origin, and in this respect, furthermore, differences of speech, customs, occupations, etc., are to be noted. Thus, British Romanichels (Irish, Scottish, English, Welsh gipsies), Hungarian, Russian, Roumanian, Slovak, Ruthenian, Serbian, German, and French gipsies can be identified.

Among the nomad gipsies relations between the Macvaya and the Kalderas are scant but not hostile; the Macvaya constitutes the most real and original gipsies among them. The nomad American gipsies are held together by their gipsy tribunal or 'Romany Kris.' The nomads have no relations with the sedentary gipsies; relations between the different groups of sedentary gipsies, which were originally infrequent, have become closer and better since the differences of origin between them are disappearing under the influence of their American environment and their increasing assimilation to it. Although the original gipsy immigrants still keep closely together, living in the same quarter of a town, the younger generations entertain much closer relations with other gipsies than their parents who limit their connections to business only. Thus, the actual situation among the sedentary gipsies discloses a new type of all-American gipsy. They are becoming rapidly ungipsylike and regular American citizens.

Not much is known about the structure of the groups of wandering American gipsies. The different groups recognisable among them are based on patrilineal relation-

ship and they have much resemblance with extended families. It appears that they subdivide themselves into groups of 20 to 30 patriarchal families. The sedentary gipsies often live all together in the neighbourhood of each other in the same part of a town, each family or group of families, however, keeping to itself.

The nomad gipsies in America have no real chief invested with power and authority. Among them, the head of the family is its supreme chief but he is often obliged to share his power with his wife. In case of difficulties with the law a group gets together to organise the release of an offender, and they put up money jointly to pay for a lawyer or to bribe the police. The leader of such action when conversing with non-gipsies often tells them that he is the 'king' of the gipsies but in reality he has no power at all and his authority is restricted to the settlement of the case in point and it often happens that he is deprived of his office by the other gipsies because he is suspected of using the money for his own needs. Another type of leader among these gipsies is their spokesman who acts for them in case of business transactions with non-gipsies, for example for the renting of a camping-ground or for the negotiation of joint labour. But again he has no real authority or power over his feliow tribesmen.

In olden days, however, different tribes must have had their 'kings'. The early German gipsies in Pennsylvania had at the time of their arrival in America (1750) two 'kings', the Einsich family, which is still represented, also claims to have a 'king' today just as formerly. A part of the nomad American gipsies who mainly originated from the same parts of Europe subjected itself to the authority of 'king' Kis Mihajlo (1880). In another instance the coronation of gipsy Queen Matilda II of English gipsy origin is mentioned near Dayton, Ohio. in 1888. In the

records of this event it is stated that she was absolute ruler over all gipsies in America but this statement, however, is not in accordance with the facts. It may be noted that King Kis Mihajlo's reign fell in the same period.

The sedentary gipsies do not acknowledge a 'king' or a leader with the exception perhaps of a business representative for their dealings with non-gipsies. Among the gipsy musicians the 'primas' is the leader of the orchestra as well as its manager.

In the last century in America meetings of gipsies were known of. It seems, however, that they were merely shows for the benefit of the non-gipsy public and not gipsy assemblies where gipsy problems and affairs were discussed.

Among the nomad American gipsies a gipsy tribunal or 'Romany Kris' decides on disputes arising from marriage annulments, accusations, theft, and claims for money due from communal holdings or work done in common. Furthermore, the tribunal decides on breaches of gipsy law and uncleanness taboos which are often punished with lasting or temporary exclusion. Exclusion may even follow automatically without a tribunal having assembled.

In case of minor infringements, for example in the observance of uncleanness taboos which are judged according to the degree of defilement involved, temporary exclusion may be the measure taken against the culprit who himself has also become unclean by his error. At a 'Romany Kris' he may be reinstated in the gipsy community after he has paid a fine of food and drink to the members of the tribunal and afterwards a feast is generally held. It is customary for the gipsies to assist each other when in need. It is the custom, too, for them to arrange their own affairs and it is easy to understand from this point of view

that it is considered ungipsylike and disgraceful to bring gipsy cases before a non-gipsy court.

A 'Romany Kris', at which gathering no women are allowed, is composed of all adult men of the group or groups. The president of the tribunal, called 'o baro' (cognate with the Hindi word for elder), is a man of influence and persuasion and known for fairness. He is selected by the contesting parties by mutual agreement. The power of the president is limited and he only can influence the tribunal which generally assembles at his home. From this and from the fact that the verdict must be unanimous, including the adhesion of the litigants and from the restricted power of moral persuasion of the tribunal itself, it follows that many trials cannot be terminated and are often adjourned in consequence.

If at a trial no witnesses can be brought forward, the accused and the accuser have to swear on a candle-fire or on iron, as in India, or by a dead ancestor, to the truthfulness of their statements of innocence or guilt.

Gipsies are talented musicians all over Europe. They have carried their reputation to America also. An interview with Arpad, a gipsy musician of California, published by *San Francisco Chronicle* (and given to me by the managing editor of the journal) is reproduced below :

Arpad explains that most of his fellow gipsies in the music business play only for private parties in a hit-and-miss fashion, wander a good deal and it's difficult for the union to keep track of them.

"In addition many argue too much", he says. "They are unreliable and get drunk on *tata pani*—literally 'hot water', or whisky —and then have to move on."

Arpad comes within a definite clan composed of gipsies with the family names of D'Zurko, Bandy, Horvath and Rigo. This tribe embraces 800-odd members, all related by blood. All fine musicians. Most gipsy musicians are centred in the large cities of the East—Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and New York—where great colonies of south-east European immigrants live and want the music that sustained them in the Old World.

Arpad says flatly he and Benci Karol in Los Angeles, who was once one of the foremost violinists in New York, are the only gipsy musicians—the only *lavufaras*—on the Pacific Coast.

He knows this, he asserts, because "we always know where each other is stationed." When someone in the musician class marries or moves or dies or a gipsy girl is wronged, the other 25,000 members know in 72 hours. This far-flung gipsy grapevine is carried on by letter-writing, an important link among modern gipsies, according to Arpad.

The wealth of gipsy assertions about their life and times is not denied by scholars, who admit their Romany studies have been confined mainly to Europe.

Professor Robert H. Lowie, Chairman of the Anthropology Department at the University of California, openly laments the lack of adequate investigation of gipsy customs in the United States and the non-existence here of something akin to London's famed Gipsy Lore Society.

C. Grant Loomis, associate professor of German at Berkeley and an intense student of folklore, professes similar ignorance of gipsies in this country and implies that possibly gipsies themselves are the best source for such information.

So Arpad speaking again: The majority of gipsies in the United States, possibly 60,000, are known as *lafkve*, or travelling gipsies. Sometimes they are called *kalo rom*, which means 'black gipsy'—a name derived from their dark complexions achieved through centuries of exposure to the sun (*Kala* is Hindi for dark).

These gipsies are nomads and most of them arrived in the United States in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, though there is evidence of gipsies in America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among themselves, they speak a sort of gipsy patois, a language whose vowel system is based on Sanskrit and attests the contention that gipsies originally lived in Northern India, migrating from there sometime before the ninth century.

Arpad, who has made a study of Romany and modern Hindi, offers these words of similarity:

| *English* | *Gipsy* | *Modern Hindi* |
|---|---|---|
| One | Yek | Ek |
| Fire | Yag | Aag |
| Mouth | Mui | Mukh |
| Nose | Nak | Nak |

Before the advent of the automobile, nomadic gipsies in the United States were shrewd horse-traders and it is said that at one time a gipsy furnished all the horses for San Francisco's horse-cars. Cost to the city is not reported.

Others made their livings as tinkers, farriers, coppersmiths and pedlars of baskets, brooms and oil-cloth. They did not steal children.

usually having more of their own than they could comfortably handle. Their women, in dresses of many colours and with fine silk handkerchiefs over their heads, still tell fortunes. Encampments of wandering gipsies were fairly common sights before war in southern San Mateo and Alameda counties, but now these gipsies have established headquarters in Florida and the Carolinas.

The Alameda county sheriff's office said a number of them worked in the shipyards during the war and then departed with their wealth. A deputy reported they were chiefly remembered in the Niles Canyon area for a habit of painting a man's car for a very cheap price—with house paint—warning him not to drive for two days.

The third and smallest class of gipsies in this country, Arpad says. is the Zemplyechuns, who are half gipsy and half *gajo* or non-gipsy. There are about 15,000 of these half-breeds, most of them working in the mines and steel mills of the industrial East. Many are on relief.

Mixed marriages are not encouraged among gipsies but Arpad is married to a *gajo*, Betty House, whose ancestors came from England by a close successor to the Mayflower. The couple eloped to Pittsburgh and this distressed Arpad's family which had arranged a marriage for him with a 15-year-old gipsy girl, a Horvath.

Among the Macvaya gipsies many rich property-owners are to be found; others among them are masons but most of them do nothing at all and rely on their wives' fortune-telling. Among the Kalderas gipsies, jewel-makers and tinkers with autos to sell (instead of horses) are also to be noted. As a rule the gipsies are good metal-workers. Among the nomad American gipsies few professional musicians have been found. Horse-dealers and sellers of lace are noted among the nomad gipsies of Irish origin while basket-makers have also been found among nomad gipsies of other origin. The nomad coppersmiths have no trade.

Fortune-telling is practised by nearly all gipsy women and it brings in large income as it is very popular in America. The women of the nomad coppersmith gipsies are great mendicants as are some other nomad gipsy women.

Honest occupations of sedentary American gipsies are: smithy, music, horse-dealing, basket-making, peddling, and lace-selling. Ordinary business men are also included

among them. Among the gipsies of Roumanian origin, who were originally bear-leaders, are found today as animal trainers, showmen, medicine-men and bear-leaders, while the women are fortune-tellers. Some gipsies have also become industrial workers, mechanics, truck-drivers, and wage-earners. The children tend to abandon more and more the specific gipsy trades of their parents for more reputable occupations.

The present number of gipsies in U.S.A. is estimated at being between 100,000 to 200,000. The great rush of gipsy immigration, already noted, was during the second part of the nineteenth century. Under the influence of European disdain for the gipsies, however, their entry was soon made difficult and in 1885 some of them were sent back. When immigration into U.S.A. became difficult, many gipsies settled in Central and South America while others entered Canada only to be able to pass from there to U.S.A., where the gipsies wanted to be above all. It should be remarked that generally no opposition was offered to the entrance of gipsies who arrived individually.

In U.S.A., the gipsies are free to wander and it is only on account of their obscure occupations that they come into conflict with the police who often still allow fortune-telling against a weekly fee paid for this purpose. The nomad gipsies are not allowed in Florida ; evidence of similar regulations in other States has not been found.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

# THEIR FAITH AND SPIRIT

**Belief in Fate—Four Rules for Life—Old Gipsy Prophecy: Back to North India—Spanish Gipsies and the Bible—Red is Sacred—Gipsy Philosophy—Learning to Bear with Prejudice—And When They Fight.**

THIS ACCOUNT is culled from a book *Hard Hearts Are For Cabbages* written by a gipsy woman writer vii Putnam of New York whose grandfather 'King' Michael I, buried his second wife with $900,000 worth of gold coins and jewels sewn in her gown.

There is a good deal of fatalism in gipsy philosophy. No gipsy ever worries about the inevitable. They all regard misfortunes as part of their 'Karma'.

"Gipsy eyes have a strange phosphorescence and you can see them even in the dark. This is one mark of a Romany. Another is the flashing gipsy eye, an involuntary lifting of the upper eyelid for an instant to show the white above the iris. A Romany does this without knowing it when he is surprised, or startled, or delighted and greatly amused. I have never seen a non-gipsy do it". (p. 134)

"The Romany has four rules for life: always help brothers; never harm brothers; always pay when you owe although not necessarily money; and never be afraid". (p. 112)

"Not to laugh is the greatest sin among us Romany, greater than any other".

*"We were the Dards of India, an Aryan people speaking Sanskrit. Much of our language is Sanskrit, the rest of the words are taken from many lands we passed through.*

*From the borrowed words you can tell whether we lived long or a little time in the countries we passed through. Our language has three thousand words or so, fifty-three sounds of alphabet, many almost alike, and an eight-case declension.* The grammar is different from all other tongues, and one gipsy can understand another anywhere in the world. Feminine words end in *-i;* masculine words end in *-o* (As in Rajputana and Malva in Central India—*C.L.*).

"Most of us, since time immemorial, have dreamt of a land of our own. *According to the traditional belief we would some day all move back to Northern India, even though many among our younger brothers speak of South America as the land of opportunity.* 'Ava, Yes,' the king (gipsy king) said, at the last gipsy congress in Warsaw. He added: 'This I suggest you do: Let those families who want to move back to Northern India send delegates, young people and elders, to the Hindu Kush to study the land, their reception, the conditions. Let those who do not feel that we should return to the Hindu Kush and thus fulfil the old prediction, but who feel South America offers a better way of life and more for our children, send delegates there. You are free souls. The world is wide. Each man must work his own future. Throughout the crowd there was a general nodding of heads at the king's wisdom". (page 63)

"They raise their violins and play the Rom Gillie—the song of gipsy wanderings over the ages, sad, laughing, beautiful, never the same twice, yet always the same for two thousand years. The people sing to the violin music the history of our race. The song tells of the Dards (a Kashmiri tribe) of India, from the banks of the Indus river, through Persia when the Shah of Persia received eleven thousand *luris*—entertainers—as a gift from a *maharaja* (Shankal of Kanauj) of India two thousand years or more

ago; then it takes Romany to the time of Alexander the Great, when they were sword-makers and shield-makers for his soldiers, since the Romany have always been the best metal-workers in the world. The song tells of many wonderful things the gipsies have done. It sings of a prince of Maedavra, who was a gipsy and a friend of the Emperor of Austria-Hungary. It also mentions the twelve gipsy dukes wearing Emperor's gold on their coats and buttons as big as hen's eggs. And it ends with the ancient prophecy that when the world burns and almost dies, the Romany will survive and return to India". (pp. 54-55)

"George Borrow went to Spain to sell Bibles, and wrote the first book printed in gipsy language *The Book of St Luke*. This he had printed and gave our people. The women carried the books in their pockets and fought over them—there were only two or three hundred copies made. You know why they fought ? The books had a gold cross on the covers and they wanted a copy to show the judge to prove they were Christian ladies when they were arrested, so he would let them off.

"All copies are now in the trunk of Roms (gipsies). and one of our most cherished treasuries". (pp. 230-231)

"Red cloth and red cord are sacred among the gipsies as among the Hindus.

"On my eating table was a red ribbon with two twenty-dollar coins from my grandfathers, and seven ten-dollar coins from aunts and uncles. I wanted them on red silk cord. 'Red silk cord is sacred for you when you get married', said Baba. He added, 'Red silk is not for little girls'. 'Red shoe-string of silk, then', I demanded. Baba scolded, 'Red shoe-string, no. When a Romany man gives a girl a red shoe-string of silk, if she wants to marry him she ties it in her hair. Not for you until you are twelve or fourteen' ".

"You must take a vow of poverty ... You give to all Romany (brothers and sisters) in need, before they ask, and not to be thanked, whatever you can. You love all people, and you separate that which they do from that which they are. Because what a person does may be an accident or a habit, but what they really are is the important thing. You understand".....

"Some things are not for sale, Vanita, and what you give to people, what you do for them, always comes back to you when you need it most. Not often from the same person. You start a chain of help". (page 60)

"Beauty and love and life are all like that : they always hurt you if you think at all about them. Beauty, poetry, philosophy, children are like that". (p. 137)

Talking of prejudice against gipsy children in schools the writer describes the lot of two gipsy children thus :

"Ferdu, a fifth-grader, acted as our guide and mentor. His final instructions as he left Arpad and me at the first grade door were, 'Now remember, don't talk back (to the white students), don't sass anybody, smile, keep your mouth shut, and especially don't tell anyone you are gipsies.'

"And he told me: 'Don't get in any fights'. 'Not if they don't start any", I agreed. All went well until the school day ended at three fifteen. The lower grade students had to wait for the bus until 3.30 when the senior grades finished their school. They were playing in the grounds when a neighbour's son (who knew we were gipsies) pointed at the gipsy girl and said, 'Look at her hair. Just like a gipsy. Look'. He invited the crowd of students. I looked around and noticed that all other girls had short hair and curls. Their clothing was subtly different, too. The fat white boy went on : 'I told you she was a gipsy. She is from that dirty gipsy camp next to my uncle's house.' He pointed at Arpad and shouted 'You are a dirty gipsy.'

"'I am not dirty,' Arpad said reasonably. The fat boy snatched Arpad's hat and threw it in the drainage ditch.

"Arpad crawled down the ditch to pick it up. I edged out of the crowd and helped him climb the steep way back up. We came to the top. The fat boy and his two companions were waiting for us. The fat boy yelled: 'Throw the dirty old gipsies back down. Push them back into the ditch'. Arpad answered them with a piece of stone and all the three boys turned and ran screaming for the teachers.

"Next day they had a worse experience. It started with the neighbour's son telling them in the playground: 'You keep away from our school, you dirty gipsies. We don't want you here. My uncle says we can't play with you.'

"They had a fight and ran back home on foot—a five-mile walk.

"At home they told the shameful story to their grandfather and asked him: 'Why, grandpa, do they misbehave?'

"'It is a thing you will learn to live with,' replied the grandpa and added, 'I had hoped your first lesson wouldn't come so young. We are like the white crows, or the off-coloured foxes. The other crows or foxes try to kill them, the different ones, or at least drive them away from the next. People do that with the ones who are different too'". (pages 93-96)

"A Romany fight is something to see. Everybody jumps in and does the best he or she can. The women are far more to be feared than the men, yelling and pulling hair and biting, while the men are satisfied to dismember their opponents. One thing is never done under any circumstances; no gipsy will strike or injure a man below the waist. The seed of man is considered precious, and to risk making a man infertile and childless is unthought of.

"During a fight between the two tribes, even the children help. The smaller ones gang up in pairs and each child stands on a foot, locks his arms around a man's leg and bites". (p. 261)

'If they shake hands or drink from each other's glasses after a fight, it is over for all times and never mentioned again". (p. 262)

## CHAPTER XIX

# MARRIAGE AND MORALS

**Rules like Those of Code of Manu—Punishment for Adultery—Gipsy Cannot Cheat Gipsy—Crimes against Non-Gipsies Viewed Leniently—Procedures for Divorce—Courtship Customs—Cakes with Coins—Presenting of Red Kerchief—Candles Lit at Riverside—Payment of Bridal Price—Thorn-Apple Seeds to Ward off Bad Luck—Childbirth—Child Dipped in Water and Held over Fire—Charming the Goddesses—Prevalence of Polygamy—Elopement and its Causes—Freedom for Children.**

THE RULES of the gipsy code remind us of the Laws of Manu. No gipsy can tell a lie to any member of his race. Gipsy laws prove the high moral foundations of gipsies before they left India.

According to gipsy law, a gipsy may not rob another gipsy, he has to repay a debt at a fixed place and time, he may not cheat a fellow-gipsy, he must tell the truth, and he must help one who is in need. Non-observance of these laws is punished by a fine of several times the amount stolen or unpaid, or by forced labour, or by whipping, or even by exclusion.

Adultery and infidelity of a woman are punished severely by exclusion. It was punished, formerly, by facial mutilation, exposure in the nude, shaving of the head, etc. An adulterous husband is punished more rarely. Once upon a time, he was shot in his arms or legs. Non-observance of uncleanness taboos is punished according to the degree of defilement by measures ranging from temporary outlawry to lasting exclusion.

Man and wife remain true to each other, especially when they have children. The husband expresses his great love

for his wife by giving her at intervals a good thrashing and she accepts this as a natural sign of his love.

Among the normal gipsies, exclusion from gipsy society is the severest punishment that can be inflicted on one of its members.

Jurisdiction is effected by a gipsy tribunal presided over by a judge who is generally the chief of the group at the same time. Among the nomad American gipsies, the judge is selected conjointly by the opposing parties.

*Ab initio*, a gipsy judge had more power. Today, he is obliged to share his power with the gipsy tribunal. Moreover, non-gipsy control (State's Voyvodes, etc.) has largely reduced his power.

As a rule, the gipsy tribunal is composed of men of mature age or of the old men of the group or of the heads of the families or groups. Among the south-eastern Balkan and German gipsies, the trials are secret whilst at the trials of the German, nomad American, and some of the English gipsies no women are permitted to be present.

The guilt or innocence of the accused is occasionally established by a majority or a minority of witnesses produced by the parties.

Theft and deceit in a gipsy are punished ; the offender is obliged to refund three to nine times the amount stolen or to repay it in brandy (Transylvania) or he will be flogged (Moldavia, Wallachia). Nevertheless, the same crimes committed at the expense of non-gipsies are not punished at all. Quarrels are also often settled by payment in brandy (Transylvania). Another group of laws concerns marital life. Formerly, among some sedentary gipsies in Transylvania, a marriage not concluded in gipsy fashion was punished with exclusion. Infidelity and adultery on the side of the wife allowed of punishments including even the

heaviest penalty known among the gipsies (exclusion) but it could be also completely ignored.

In the Balkans, according to Wlislocki, a faithless woman was judged by a "secret tribunal (manlaslo) which 'tips the black spot', in the shape of a circular piece of wood with a peg driven through it." In Hungary, a faithless woman was "flogged, gashed in four places on her limbs, left naked, tied to a stake for twenty-four hours, and then expelled from her band".

Even until recently punishment for infidelity by facial mutilation has been noted. In Roumania, in 1937, a man cut off his wife's nose to punish her for her infidelity and she accepted the punishment as quite natural. This punishment for infidelity and adultery has been noted among many different gipsies and it is as well-known in India as in medieval Europe. In Transylvania, adultery was occasionally punished by temporary exclusion, from the tribe, of the culprits who bought themselves in again after a certain time had elapsed by paying a tribute of brandy. Of course, adultery was sometimes followed by divorce. A faithless husband was also punished on some occasions, for example in Hungary by a shot in his arms or legs.

However, these kinds of punishment are disappearing (they are not even allowed by local laws on ill-treatment). Banishment and exclusion from the gipsy group have become the most severe penalties for it.

Dissolution of marriage is not uncommon among the English gipsies as may be observed from the trial marriages which are occasionally concluded. Marriages which have lasted some considerable time, however, are seldom separated, or divorced, although divorce is obtained without formality.

The Scottish gipsies observed, more than 150 years ago, an elaborate form of divorce ceremony. On such an occasion, the guilt of a woman was determined by the priest according to the movements of a horse which was brought into the room of the woman. The horse was then charged with the sins of the woman and sacrificed if the woman was innocent. Sometimes, even if she was guilty, it was killed. When the divorce was pronounced, the woman was given a token which she was obliged to carry always on her person and it was forbidden for her ever to marry again. Transgressions of these rules were punished with death. The husband, however, was allowed to take another wife.

The English gipsies have few courtship and betrothal customs and regulations. Among the present English gipsies the chastity of the unmarried girls has been well preserved. But this favourable state of affairs is not only due to the wearing of a virginal girdle, as once it was customary for an English gipsy girl to protect her maidenhood, but to the severe prohibitions on pre-nuptial intercourse. The early age of marriage and the short time of courtship are, moreover, two other very realistic factors guaranteeing the chastity of the young girl. It may be noted, on the other hand, that unmarried girls sometimes are allowed to cohabit with their married sisters' husbands.

The girls generally never meet their lovers alone, although this regulation may have been loosened today. Use is made of signs to signify their inclinations. Thus, the girl will wear a handkerchief, which she has received from her lover, when she loves him, or she will not protest when he presses her foot as she would do if she did not like him.

Other, more formal, signs are the presenting of something red to the young man by the girl as a sign that she accepts his advances or the tossing of a cake containing coins to

him ; these old customs, however, have never been confirmed by other investigations but as they are generally known among other people they may be regarded as borrowings. Other signs are known to signify betrothal. It once seems to have been customary, as is usual today among the Turkish gipsies, to drink out of the same cup, an action forbidden for a man and a girl of different families.

Another sign, noted at the beginning of this century, is that the girl sits apart from her lover when another suitor comes, and loosens her hair to signify that she is betrothed already; this custom is mentioned among other gipsies in association with childbirth and elsewhere it is considered a most defiling action.

Courtship among the gipsies of the south-eastern Balkans often follows a definite ritual. Wlislocki relates that if a young man falls in love with a girl he takes one of the two red kerchiefs he wears on Sundays and presents it to her. The other kerchief he fixes to his tent but as a young man mostly has as yet no tent of his own, he fastens it to his girl's tent as a sign that they will soon marry.

Schwicker gives a description of a more formal way of betrothal. He tells us that when a young man loses his heart to a girl he deputes one of his friends to have a look at her. If this friend, too, approves of the girl, he will announce to the amorous young man that he has no objection to an eventual marriage. Both friends then go to the bride-elect and propose to her. If she says "Yes" the bridegroom must still obtain the consent of her parents and fix with them the amount of the bridal purchase. Only after all these arrangements are made and the bridal price has been paid is the young man permitted to visit his girl. At his second visit he gives her a silver coin after having kissed it to seal their betrothal. Next he presents her with

a kerchief for her head which she will put on at once if she is really in love with him. Girls especially try to find out what kind of a man they will marry, or whether he is in love with them too. To ascertain this they make use of various kinds of love charms and love potions made by witches.

Nowadays the young gipsy and his girl meet secretly before asking for their parents' consent and many old forms are disregarded.

Among the gipsies of the south-eastern Balkans, marriage is concluded at an early age, mostly between the ages of 14 and 18 years. Schwicker mentions mothers of even 13 and 14 years of age. Marriages between young men and old women or young girls and old men occur frequently and are mainly determined by the advantage of a good bridal price or dowry and the wealth of one of the parties.

Marriage preparations are various in kind. Continuing Wlislocki's account we see that the betrothed go at night to the nearest river about a week before their marriage. There, at the riverside, they light two candles, and if the wind extinguishes one of them this must be considered an evil omen.

To change their bad luck they throw eggs and apples into the water. It may be noted here that similar customs are known also among the populations of Greece, Bulgaria and Alabania and are in no way peculiar to Transylvania or to these gipsies. After having made these offerings to the gods of the water, the couple returns home and begins preparations for the marriage.

The bridegroom goes round with some musicians to invite his friends and relatives to assist at the marriage. He makes this invitation dancing and singing a song asking for gifts. Elsewhere invitations are sometimes transmitted by a man especially appointed for this purpose. In the

meantime, the bride burns her charm, the "Himmeslfahrts-blumchen" protecting her against evil, which she had picked on St John's Night before her marriage, out of fear that another girl may find it. Mr. Block and others tell us that before the marriage can be concluded the bridal price must have been fixed by the bride's father and paid to him by the young man through the agency of his father. The bridal price generally consists of money, tools or some horses. Furthermore, small presents are exchanged between the bride's parents and their future son-in-law. Sometimes, as in Hungary, the bridegroom is forced to make an apron for his bride; this apron is burnt later at the wedding or at the birth of the first child.

On the day of the marriage, according to Wlislocki, the guests assemble before the tent of the bride who accepts their gifts. Then the whole party goes to the church. Before the church they are addressed by an elder; the couple may then be married in it. After the marriage ceremony the priest also presents them with some gifts. Back in the camp, the couple are sprinkled with water, a well-known custom in the Balkans, and afterwards bride and bridegroom are rubbed with a bag filled with thorn-apple seeds to secure them against bad luck and the evil eye. Next the husband and wife retire to their own tent while shoes are thrown after them to increase fertility.

When they return, feasting begins. Schwicker adds some further details. The marriage is concluded at market-time under a big tent. The parents of the bride and bridegroom rise to drink to the health of their children after everybody has been seated. After the bride and bridegroom have kissed each other, their parents execute a special dance. Only when they have finished are the others allowed to dance also, and feasting begins.

On other occasions the marriage is sealed by the parents, who are assisted by the chief of the tribe and the elders. Mr. Block records that marriage is generally concluded about Whitsuntide.

In southern Hungary, the bride drops some blood "from her left hand on the hair of her husband during the wedding night". And in northern Hungary, both bride and bride-groom smear the soles of their left feet with each other's blood.

The wedding night is of special interest to everybody present. The question whether the bride is a virgin or not is of great importance as pre-nuptial chastity is held among the gipsies in high honour. Even among the sedentary gipsies such customs are still known. And in case there is a negative result, and the bride is not virgin, they try to adduce proof with the aid of the blood of a chicken. But if the bride is found not to be a virgin, and in case of such deceit, her parents may count upon the vengeance of the relatives of their son-in-law.

In some regions of Moldavia and Wallachia, the custom of "diklo", described in an earlier chapter, still obtains.

It may be assumed that church marriage alone is not considered valid among the gipsies of the south eastern Balkans and that only a marriage concluded according to gipsy ritual is recognised. It may be noted that the sedentary gipsies especially also celebrate church-weddings.

Among the nomad gipsies a child is born in the most unceremonious manner without a doctor's help, and only seldom is a midwife called in for assistance. The gipsy woman may help herself perhaps before birth with a charm for luck, for example a little locket with red hair.

Many regulations of a ritual nature exist concerning birth. Birth in the tent is a severe taboo. Thus, the expectant

mother is obliged to go elsewhere, either into the open or else into the house of a non-gipsy, for the delivery at which she may be assisted only by a midwife and not by any other gipsies. Such a midwife is considered defiled for the whole of her life and nobody may touch her or her possessions at the risk of being defiled oneself.

A short time after the birth the mother is allowed to return to her tent, where the infant will be visited by fairies for whom nutriment has been prepared to influence them favourably, or a fire has been lighted to keep them away. After this mysterious visit the mother is not considered unclean any more and she may be visited by other women. For her husband, however, the mother and the newly born child remain unclean during forty days until the child has been christened; at some places and in more recent times this period has been reduced to four weeks or even less. (This is analogous to Hindu customs in India—*C.L.*)

Among the nomads, the infant is bathed in cold water at once after birth during wintertime to protect it against cold, and in summer it is rubbed with fat to protect it against heat. The christening of the child may consist of no ceremony at all except that it is immersed in running water, but on the other hand several baptismal ceremonies are known.

One is that the child is held over an open fire by the chief to give it "the vital energy of the sun, and to purge it of all evil influence". Elsewhere, however, more complicated ceremonies are celebrated, for example among the Hungarian gipsies.

The ceremony begins, according to Wlislocki, with the drinking of brandy mixed with water and magical herbs, of which "three drops are sprinkled on the child's bed" and three pieces of bread put beside the child must charm the

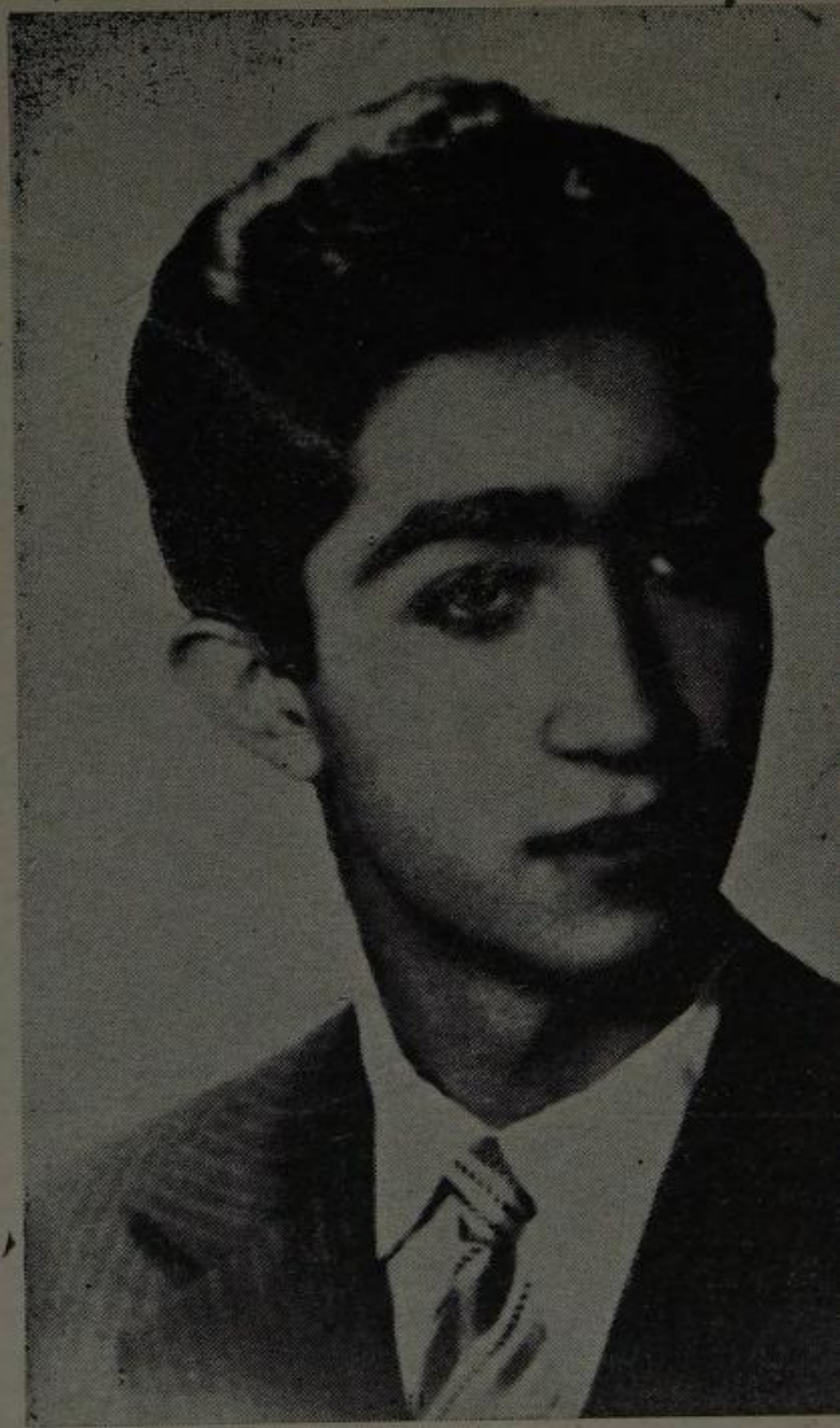
goddesses of fate to grant it beauty and happiness. It is then laid on the ground to give it strength and a circle is drawn around it by a "witch" who then proceeds to sprinkle coal dust and snake powder in the circle as protection against illness. In case the child begins to cry this is interpreted as a sign of future sickness, and to prevent this a piece of its navel-string is burnt over it by the "witch" and the oldest man in order "to bind the hostile spirits". To tease the wood spirits who are envious of babies the children dance around the little child throwing nuts into the bushes.

Afterwards the child is washed with water and magical herbs and taken to be christened in church, while the "witch" with some women throws millet seed into a nearby river to give the child fertility. Among other gipsies, the child is first placed on the threshold, then in all corners of the room on thorn-apples, next on the hearth and lastly on the family's eating place, where it is anointed with bread, meat and brandy, to ensure that the child will have enough to eat and drink when it is grown up. Lastly, it is kissed by all present.

A difference between two groups of gipsies is to be noted. Among Bulgarian, Serbian and south-eastern Balkan, and England, courting is done by the suitor himself, while among the Bulgarian (in some cases), the Serbian, the Coppersmith, and the nomad American gipsies it generally does not exist in this form. On the other hand, the first mentioned group does not observe, as a rule, formal betrothal, while the gipsies belonging to the second group do.

Among the gipsies of the second group, the father generally arranges the betrothal (and the marriage); occasionally, even before the birth of his child. The wife must be bought and with the settlement of the bridal price, after which a feast is held, the betrothal becomes valid. The

Sarbojid a gipsy student of Belgrade (Yugoslavia). His father is the Yugoslav advocate referred to in the opening chapter.



A veteran actress of the Gipsy Theatre, Moscow

Author (in monk's robes) and Gipsy Artiste (third from left) in Moscow. The two gipsy young women are wearing saries. At left is an Indian visitor and second from right is an official from the Indian Embassy.

Young woman in the photograph is a gipsy from Belgrade. She wants to visit India and learn Hindi.

Orthodox and Muslim gipsies manifest only slight differences in this connection.

Among the gipsies of the second group, the decision of the father, sometimes of the family, regarding choice of marriage partners, indicates the existence of a firmly established patriarchy. The prior consent of the father or of the parents which is sought is not exclusive to father-right, as it is also to be found in mother-right societies.

Bulgarian and Transylvanian gipsies make use of proxy before courtship or betrothal.

The early betrothal, which has been noted occasionally, is mainly due to external circumstances such as the lack of marriageable girls or the fact that the bridal price paid is lower.

Among the gipsies few unmarried men and women are to be found. Monogamy is the rule. Polygyny is found among Bulgarian, south-eastern Balkan, Serbian and English gipsies. The absence of cases of polygyny among the other unmentioned gipsies does not prove that they do not know of it. The nomad American gipsies, for example, do not prohibit it.

Polygyny exists in father-right and mother-right societies as well and it does not exclude matrilocal marriage. As a cause of polygyny among the gipsies, the increase of wealth by more working women may be mentioned. Other reasons are: love of children and elevation of social standing among the others. Polygynous marriages are concluded successively among the gipsies. In Serbia, the first wife is allowed a divorce if her husband takes a second wife.

But polygyny is yet relatively rare among the gipsies because they are generally too poor to buy a second wife. Christian gipsies do not know polygyny because of religious prohibition.

Chastity of girls is well guarded and pre-nuptial intercourse is prohibited in principle, although, illegitimate children are not regarded as a disgrace to a woman. This being different from the practice in mother-right groups of gipsies in Asia, it may be inferred that the gipsies have undergone European influence in their moral standards.

Usually prostitution is severely punished among the gipsies. Prostitutes are mostly found among women who are excluded from the group, or among sedentary gipsy women. Indeed sedentary life has a relaxing influence on the prescriptions regarding the chastity of girls and their morality. This is caused by the constant pressure of social environment which they cannot elude like the nomad gipsies.

As seen earlier, a bridal price must be paid among many gipsies before a marriage can take place. Its payment is known alike to the nomad and sedentary types. At times, part of the bridal price is paid after the marriage has been concluded but if this sum is not paid within a certain time the wife must return to her parents or the couple will elope. The amount tends to be higher among Muslim gipsies than among the Christian gipsies. Muslim 'Korano Rom' in Serbia even deposit a sum which will be given to the wife in case of divorce. The bridal price among the Coppersmith gipsies and the nomad American gipsies is very high. The whole price or part of it is often refunded when the marriage is cancelled.

Sometimes, a dowry or a trousseau, or gifts collected among the attendants of the marriage are given to the bride or to the couple. It is not known whether, in this group of gipsies, these presents to the wife remain her personal property and if she has the right to take them with her in case of divorce or death. The purchase of a wife by paying

a bridal price or in any other way is not observed among the Transylvanian, German and English gipsies.

The consent of the father or of the parents to marriage is almost always asked. Among some gipsies in the south eastern Balkans, even the consent of the chief of the tribe must be obtained. If no permission to marry is given the couple elopes. Elopement seems to be almost a normal form of marriage among the gipsies of the south-eastern Balkans, Germany and especially among the English gipsies. Usually the couple returns to the camp after a short time. The marriage will be considered valid after the couple has been punished slightly by the parents. Elopement may also have other reasons. In the south-eastern Balkans it would appear that the gipsy chief has a kind of a prior right to a girl and, therefore, the parents will occasionally allow their daughter to elope with her lover for fear that the chief may appropriate her.

Let us now examine the gipsies' attitude to children. All gipsies love their children very dearly. In those gipsy societies where uncleanness taboos prevail, children are not considered unclean or susceptible to defilement until the boys grow up to be ten or thirteen and the girls have their first menstruation.

No initiation ceremonies have been noted among the gipsies. But gipsy children are mature at a very early age. The children of nomad gipsies grow up unchecked and without much care being taken of them. They easily imitate and adopt the habits of their elders with no instruction. Occasionally, a gipsy father teaches his sons his trade, if he has any. Sometimes, gipsy children are used on scouting jobs by their parents. Some grow up to be importunate beggars.

Nomad gipsy children attend school irregularly or not at all. Formerly, schoolmasters and non-gipsy parents were

opposed to gipsy children attending school and for that reason special gipsy schools were founded. Today, in some countries, the law forces gipsy (vagrant) parents to take care that their children receive elementary education. Sedentary gipsies show much more eagerness to receive education. In America, many educated sedentary gipsies of the present generation are known to have abandoned gipsy for non-gipsy trades.

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## CHAPTER XX

# PUNJABI AND ROMANY PARALLELS

### By John Samson

**Striking Resemblances—God and the Woodcutter—The Weaver and the Prophecy—Jack and the Cabbage—The Weaver and the Water-Melon—The Padshah of Chitral.**

A DIFFICULTY of those who seek additional confirmation of the Indian origin of the gipsies in the study of their folk-lore is the unfortunate fact that their customs, with a few notable exceptions, are borrowed from other peoples, while their tales in innumerable variants are common to the whole Aryan family. Original gipsy song, it may be said at once, does not exist; for, dismissing the mythical inventions of Kounavine, a critical examination of the 'ancient' song fragments quoted by Paspati leads to the discovery that in almost every instance these are merely translations of modern Greek folk songs, klephtic or erotic, in which the very metre of the Hellenic ballad has been preserved in the gipsy rendering. The Romano, in fact, are inveterate borrowers of others' good things, wherever they may find them. Groome's 'colporteur' theory that the gipsies at some unknown date anterior to the eleventh century carried with them Indian folk tales which they disseminated among the peoples of the Balkan peninsula, is one certainly not easy to prove and, if accepted at all, capable only of very partial application. It is obviously futile to base an argument upon the existence of Indian counterparts to gipsy folk tales, when the later version may, as often seems probable, have been borrowed direct from a Greek or Slavic source. To make

a strong case for the survival of a purely Indian element in the Romany thesaurus, we must place our finger upon examples which are peculiar to the Hindu and gipsy races, and foreign to other branches of the Aryan stock. No pundit myself in this field, I leave to others the onus of determining whether convincing evidence can ever be produced, and content myself here with offering the folklorist a gipsy story, new to me, in which we have a striking parallel to a tale of indisputably Indian provenance. So much at least cannot be gainsaid, even though it should afterwards appear that there are a dozen replicas elsewhere of our Cinderella's slipper. This particular *paramu*, one of a number of tales and songs collected by Miss D. E. Yates and myself from the normal gipsy coppersmiths, was recorded from the dictation of Yorska Coron, a son of the chief.

GOD AND THE WOODCUTTER

There was an old man and he went to the forest to cut wood. He climbed on to a bough, and he cut the branch upon which he was sitting.

And a stranger passed by in a cart. And he charged the man: 'Man, do not cut that branch' (which was falling). 'Thou art not God!' And the stranger went his way, and the man fell with the branch.

It came into his head that this was the true God. And he took a bag full of dung. And he ran after the stranger and cried out: 'Wait, God! I will believe that thou art God indeed, if thou canst guess what I have here in this bag.' He said: 'Some dung is there.'

Then the man believed that He was God. 'Since thou art God, tell me how many years I have to live'. 'Until thy little mare breaks wind thrice.'

And the man piled the load of wood upon his cart, so that he might set off home. And there was a hole in the road, and his mare leapt. and she broke wind once. And he said to himself that he had two more lives to live.

And he gave the mare another blow. And the mare broke wind once more. And now he had only one more life remaining.

And he went into the outskirts of the city where he dug a grave. And he spread straw in the grave, and threw up his arms.. And he waited for death.

A strange story, weaving as it does high tragedy out of base matter, but one in which few perhaps would detect traces of a Far Eastern web and woof! So that it was with something of a thrill that in turning over the pages of some old volumes of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* I came upon what is clearly an Indian prototype in the first of a collection of thirty-two 'Folk Tales from the Upper Punjab', given in translation by the Rev. C. Swynnerton, Chaplain of Naushera. Folk tales, as everybody knows, are often enough degraded myths, but this Punjabi version, so curiously explanatory of our own, has the special interest of showing the converse process, in the development of a dramatic tale of terror from a simple story of the 'noodle' type.

THE WEAVER AND THE PROPHECY

A village weaver went out to cut firewood Climbing a tree he stood upon one of the branches, which he began to saw off close to the trunk. 'My friend', said a traveller passing below, 'you are standing on the very limb which you are cutting off. In a few minutes you and it will both fall to the ground.' The weaver unconcernedly continued his task and soon both the branch and himself fell to the foot of the tree as the traveller had foretold. Limping after him the weaver cried, 'Sir, you are God, you are God, Sir, you are God. What you prophesied has come to pass.' 'Tut, man, tut', answered the traveller, 'I am not God.' 'Nay, but you are', replied the weaver, 'and now pray, O pray, tell me when I am to die?' To be rid of his importunity, the traveller answered, 'You will die on the day on which your mouth bleeds,' and he pursued his way.

Some days had elapsed when the weaver happened to be making some scarlet cloth, and as he had frequently to separate the threads with his mouth, a piece of the coloured fibre by chance stuck in one of his front teeth. Catching sight of this in a glass, and instantly concluding that it was blood, and that his last hour was at hand, he entered his hut, and said, 'Wife, wife, I'm sick; in a few moments I shall be dead : let me lie down, and go, dig my grave!' So he lay down on his bed, and turning his face to the wall, closed his eyes, and

began deliberately to die. And indeed, such is the power of the imagination among these people, that he would have died without doubt, if a customer had not called for his clothes. He, seeing the man's condition and hearing of the prophecy, asked to examine his mouth. 'Ah', said he, 'what an idiot you are! Call you this blood?' and taking out the thread he held it before the weaver's eyes. The weaver, as a man reprieved from death, was overjoyed, and springing to his feet he resumed his work, having been rescued, as he imagined, from the very brink of the grave.

My second example is drawn from a short Welsh gipsy folk tale, narrated by a member of the family of Wood, which is essentially the same as the third story in Mr. Swynnerton's collection, 'The Weaver and the Water-melon.' Our gipsy version, it must be confessed, misses the point of the original. The water-melon has become a cabbage, and, with this transformation, disappears the likeness to the mare's egg, while poor Jack's inquiry as to the condition of the vegetable is foolish even for a *dinilo*. The second Indian variant from Chitral I discovered in Dr. Leitner's *Dardistan* in 1886 and 1893.

## JACK AND THE CABBAGE

Poor Jack lived on the mountain; he had never been in a town or a village. He heard that there was a fair in the village. 'I will go down and see it,' quoth he to himself.

So poor Jack went down to this village, and he saw a shop with two or three cabbages beneath the window. He took one in his hand to examine it. He was puzzled. He had never seen a cabbage in his life. 'Are they in the family way?' (He was a simpleton, you see.) 'Yes,' quoth the shopkeeper. 'What price are they?' asked Jack. 'Six pence', replied the woman. Jack paid the six pence, tucked the cabbage under his arm, and set off for home.

He was travelling homewards upon the little footpath that led to his house. The cabbage fell and rolled down and down the hill. There was a great gorse bush, and a hare started from it. Poor Jack saw it from the path. Off he runs now after the hare waving his cap. 'Come here, come here! That is my little foal.' He ran and he ran and then he grew tired, and he sat down, so he never caught it.

## THE WEAVER AND THE WATER-MELON

Once upon a time a poor country weaver visited a town, where he saw a quantity of water-melons piled up one above the other in front of a *bania's* shop. 'Eggs of other birds there are,' he said, 'and I have seen them; but what bird's eggs are these eggs? These must be mare's eggs !' So he asked the *bania*, 'Are these eggs mare's eggs?' The *bania* instantly cocked his ears, and perceiving that he was a simpleton answered, 'Yes, these bird's eggs are mare's eggs.' 'What is the price?' 'One hundred rupees a piece', said the *bania*. The simple weaver took out his bag of money and counting out the price, bought one of the melons and carried it off. As he went along the road, he began to say to himself, 'When I get home I will put this egg in a warm corner of my house, and by and by a foal will be born, and when the foal is big enough, I shall mount it and ride it to the house of my father-in-law. Won't he be astonished?' As the day was unusually hot, he stopped at a pool of water to bathe. But first of all he deposited the melon most carefully in the middle of a low bush, and then he proceeded to undress himself. His garments were not half laid aside when out from the bush sprang a hare, and the weaver, snatching up part of his clothing while the rest hung about his legs in disorder, made desperate efforts to chase and overtake the hare, crying out, 'Ah there goes the foal, wo, old boy, wo wo!' But he ran in vain, for the hare easily escaped, and was soon out of sight.

The poor weaver reconciled himself to his loss as best as he could. 'Kismet!' cried he : 'And as for the egg, it is of course no use now and not worth returning for, since the foal has left it.' So he made his way home and said to his wife, 'O wife, I have had a great loss this day!' 'Why', said she, 'what have you done?' 'I paid one hundred rupees for a mare's egg, but while I stopped on the road to bathe, the foal jumped out and ran away.' His wife replied, 'Ah, what a pity? If you had only brought the foal here, I would have got on his back and ridden him to my father's house!' Hearing this the weaver fell into rage, and pulling a stick out of his loom began to belabour his wife, crying, 'What, you would break the back of a young foal? Ah, you slut, let me break yours.'

After this he went out, and began to lament his loss to his friends and neighbours, warning them all, 'If any of you should see a stray foal, don't forget to let me know.' To the village herdsmen especially he related his wonderful story, how the foal came out of the egg, and ran away, and would perhaps be found grazing on the

common lands somewhere. One or two of the farmers, to whom the tale was repeated, however said, 'What is this nonsense? Mares never have eggs. Where did you put this egg of yours?' 'I put my egg in a bush', said the weaver, 'near the tank on the way to the town.' The farmers said, 'Come and show us.' 'All right,' assented the weaver, 'come along.' When they arrived at the spot the melon was found untouched in the middle of the bush. 'Here it is,' cried the weaver, 'here's my mare's egg. This is the thing out of which my foal jumped.' The farmers turned the melon over and over, and said, 'But what part of this egg did the foal jump out of?' So the weaver took the melon and began to examine it. 'Out of this', cried one of the farmers, snatching back the melon, 'no foal ever jumped. You are a simpleton, and you have been cheated. We'll show you what the foals are.' So he smashed the melon on a stone, and giving the seeds to the weaver, said, 'Here are foals enough for you,' while the farmers themselves amid much laughter sat down and ate up the fruit.

## THE PADSHAH OF CHITRAL

There is a country 'Aujer' on the frontier of Chitrar (or Chitral as we call it), the inhabitants of which in ancient times were renowned for their stupidity. One had taken service at Chitrar, and at a certain public dinner noticed that the King (Padshah) ate nothing. So he thought that it was because the others had not given anything to the King. This made him very sorry. He left the assembly, and reached home towards evening; there he prepared a great amount of bread, and brought it next day to the council enclosure, beckoning to the King with his finger to come secretly to him. The King could not make this out, and sent a servant to inquire what was the matter; but the man would not say anything except that the King should come himself. On this the King sent his confidant to find out what all this meant. The man answered the inquiries of the confidant by declaring that he had no news or claim, but 'as they all ate yesterday, and gave nothing to the King, my heart has become burnt, and I have cooked all this bread for him.' The messenger returned and told the King, who told the meeting, causing them all to laugh. The King, too, smiled and said: 'As this poor man has felt for my need, I feel for his'; and ordered the treasurer to open for him the door of the treasury, so that he might take from it what he liked. The treasurer took him to the gate, next to which was the treasurer's own house, where he had put a big water-melon, on which fell the eye of that stupid man from Aujer. He had never seen such

a thing, and when he asked, 'What is it?' the treasurer, knowing what a fool he had to deal with, said, 'This is the egg of a donkey.' Then he showed him the gold, silver, jewels, precious cloths and clean habiliments of the treasury from which to select the king's present. The man was pleased with nothing and said, 'I do not want this; but, if you please give me the egg of the donkey, then I shall be indeed glad.' The treasurer and the king's confidant, consulting together, came to the conclusion that this would amuse the King to hear, and gave him the melon, with the injunction not to return to the King, but to take the egg to his house, and come after some nights (days). The fool was charmed with this request, went towards his home, but when he was climbing a height, the melon fell out of his hand, rolled down towards a tree and broke in two pieces. Now there was a hare under that tree, which fled as the melon touched the tree. The fool went to his house full of grief, said nothing to his wife and children but sat mournfully in a corner. The wife said, 'O man why art thou sorry? And what has happened?' The man replied, : 'Why do you ask? There is no necessity.' Finally, woman much cajoling him, he said: From the treasury of the prince (Mehtar) I had brought the egg of the donkey; it fell from me on the road, broke, and the young one fled out from its midst. I tried my utmost, but could not catch it.' The woman said: 'You silly fellow? Had you brought it, we might have put loads on it.' The man replied, 'You flighty thing! How could you do so, when it was still so young? Why, its back would have been broken.' So he got into a great rage, took his axe and cut down his wife, who died on the spot.—*Journal of the Gipsy Lore Society.*

## CHAPTER XXI

# GIPSY SONGS AND RIDDLES

AGAIN and again it has been stressed in this book that the gipsies are born musicians. Their contribution to the evolution of lighter forms of Western music has been indicated. A few examples of their songs are now given which bring out the admixture of pathos and romance that is peculiar to gipsy lyrics. In the case of some the originals are given along with the translations.

*Shan raklia rinkenidiri,*
(If any girls are fairer)
*Mukkellan rinkenise*
(Then fairer let them be)
*Kik rakli dri i temia*
(No maid in all the country)
*Se rinkenidirimi*
(Is half so fair to me)

*Adre, adre O deyav*
(From trees into the water)
*Patrenea Pellelan,*
(Leaves fall and float away)
*Kenna Yek Chummer Kerdo*
(So kisses come and leave us)
*O wavero well' an*
(a thousand in a day)

*Avella Parlo Pani*
(O love come over the water)

*A-vella*
(O love, wherever you be!)
*Mi Kamli tani-rani*

(My own sweetheart, my darling)
*Avella ke turo rye*

(Come over the river to me)

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## The Pleasant Fortune

Where have you been, my darling,
That you come so late at night?
And where have you been, my own love,
That your purse has grown so light ?

I have been in the forest, darling,
I have heard the wood birds sing,
Where the squirrel picked nuts for the winter,
And the fairies had made a ring.
A gipsy came through the forest,
She was wrinkled, brown and old ;
And she looked in my hand, and I listened
To the fortune that she told.
She told me I soon should marry
A lady with yellow hair—
A lady with yellow hair, blue eyes, love,
And cheeks like the wild rose fair.

My hair is yellow as sunshine.
My eyes are violet blue ;
As wasn't it worth the money
To hear that I'll marry you ?

JANET TUCKEY

## BARO PANI (THE SEA)

*Shun the hunnalo O the Pani*
*The Hunnalo baro Pani*
*Hunnalin sarasa*
*Cos it cant Tal anduro*
*An' guryin aja!*

Hear the roar of the water
Of the great and raging sea
Raging ever on,
Because it can get no further,
And roaring all alone.

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*Si miri chumya shan kushti to ha*
(If kisses of mine were good to eat)
*Tu nasti hatch bockalo, deari aja*
(You should not go hungry long, my sweet)

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## FORTUNE TELLING

Cross the poor old gipsy's hand now
With a little bit of gold:
You've the best of luck, my lady,
That the stars have ever told,
There is a fair young man as loves you
And you love him fond and true,
There is a dark young fellow also,
Dying all for love of you.
And you'll marry him you love, miss,
And you will make a first-rate wife;
You will be mother of two children,
And be happy all your life.
And if I can read the stars right;
You will meet him here today
Look! here's someone just coming
As will bear out all I say.

## Gallows for Gipsies

One morning in Epping Forest,
Beside the ale-house door,
I talked with the Gipsy Rosa,
As I often had done before.
When she whispered quick and softly,
"Don't speak in Romany,
For there is a policeman,
Who can hear as well as see."
"But if he hears us talking,
He will not understand!"
"Why, don't you know my master,
It is against the law of the land ?
I have heard it from my father,
It may not be spoken or writ,
And many have swung on the gallows
For nothing but talking it.
And it's still down in the law-book,
And was never struck out, do ye see ?
They may swing you off the cross-beam
For a-talking, much more for a-writing
A book in the Romany.
And though you are a gentleman truly,
Don't go in the way to be hung
For I say It's a hanging matter
This talking the Romany tongue."

*Many a time I have heard the rapidly spoken whispered warning: "Ma rakka Romanys, Rya-doi vella nuscro" (Don't talk Romany, sir, there comes a policeman). More than once during my researches I have received such a kindly meant warning.*

CHARLES G. LELAND

## The Moon and the Clouds

*Tu shan i chone adre o hev,*
*Mr deari, kamela rani*
*Te waver foki shan o bav,*
*Kun gavla tut fon many*

The moon soft-moving over the heaven,
My darling, seems like thee;
And other folks are but the clouds
That hide thy face from me.

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## Help Yourself

If the gipsy man is weary,
There is a horse in the farmer's stall,
If the gipsy child is hungry,
There is a hen near the granary wall;
If the gipsy lads are thirsty,
There is beer enough for them all;
And if there's nought in the gipsy hand
There are wealthy Gorgios in all the land.

JANET TUCKEY

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## Birds and the Stars

"Tell me this, old friend, if you can tell it,
What's the Romany for stars in heaven?"
"Yes, my master, stars with us are *shirki's*
And from *chiricles* or birds, I take it,
For the birds and stars are like in nature,
Stars are only birds of light in heaven,
Flying far above our heads for ever,
Birds of fire which only fly in darkness;
And the moon's the lady of the heaven,

Coming nightly, certain in her coming,
O'er the meadows just to feed her chickens.

CHARLES G. LELAND

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## Greatest Beauty

"Oh, How do you know it, my daughter, that you have a pretty face ?"

"Surely, and surely, mother mine !"
"But see there's no mirror, not one in all the place,
So how do you know it, daughter mine ?"
"Oh, up the road and down
The fair folk and the brown
They tell me there's no beauty like myself in all the town."
"And how do they talk to you ?—make haste to answer this—

And tell me no lies, daughter mine,
Do they speak the Gorgio language or good old Romany?"

"Oh they needn't say a word, mother mine ;
They need only smile so bland,
And I'm quick to understand
There isn't such a beauty as myself in all the land!"

JANET TUCKEY

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## Gipsy Love Making

My mother's gone a-wandering
Away to yonder town ;
My father is in the ale house
Is safely settled down ;
There is not a girl to gossip,
There is not a lad at home,
I'm all alone and waiting—
So come my darling, come !—

Tell me what I'm doing
By the fire-light here,
All for you, love, all for true love,
All for luck, my dear !
I told a lady's fortune
In that big house hard by,
No gipsy could have done it
More cleverly than I.
I promised that she'd marry
A lord with heaps of gold ;
She filled my hand with silver,
As much as I could hold.
I can chatter, flatter,
Gorgios far and near
All for you, love, all for true love,
All for luck my dear !
I bought some flour last evening—
I bought it secretly.
Come now the cake is ready
And nobody to see.
Meal so white money bright,
Baked together here,
All for you, love, all for true love,
All for luck my dear !
Wait near the hedge awhile, lad,
Stay yet a moment, stay—
I'm coming now to meet you ;
In our old gipsy way
I will throw the cake right over,
Although the hedge is high,
Go, drink to me, my lover,
Go, drink the tavern dry !
What is this, just a kiss ?
Plenty, never fear.

All for you, love, all for true love,
All for luck, my dear !

JANET TUCKEY

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## HUNGRY

(The Song of Starvation)

My children are hungry—hungry-wongry,
They are dying of bitter cold—diddle diddle dum.
They haven't victuals—skittles-tittles,
They are perishing in poverty tum teedle tum.
My little tent is in tatters—batters-scatters,
All in rags a-flying highin skyin.
The cold wind is blowing—lowing-owing,
All right we're a-crying for a bit of bread a-drying.
My babe has got no mother, nor father-mother,
Certainly I should die but for master standing by.

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## SOME SONGS OF MOURNING

(Daughter to her Mother)

At the evening the little lamb returns to the fold and
Home flies the bird ; but ah, poor me whither shall I go ?
I wait and wait until thou comest back
From the country of the dead.

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The trees fade quickly, and grow green again,
But my heart is sad, and sad for ever.
The brook becomes dry and in spring-time it flows
Again; my tears are ever flowing, and they never dry.
The birds cease their singing and then again they sing.
Gone is my laughter, and no one hears the sound of my laugh any more.

---

Into the wood I will go, when the wind blows,
And to thee will I call, Oh sweet mother,

But thou comest not. Thou dost not wipe my
Tears, my heart thou dost not hear.
Lonely shall I wander, a poor Keshalyi.
Hence will I sit me down, on barren rock,
Where sing no birds, where grows no grass.
There I will sit and sorrow.

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## Gipsy Folk Riddles

Q. *What is it God does not see?*
A. Another like himself.
Q. *How is it a man with one eye can see more than a man with two?*
A. The man with one eye sees both the eyes of the other man.
Q. *What is every living creature doing at the same time?*
A. They grow older.
Q. *Where is a great field full of cows and one bull?*
A. The great field is the sky, the cows are stars and the bull is the moon.
Q. *Who thrusts his way into the queen's chamber and asks leave of none?*
A. The Sun.
Q. *A roadful, a barnful and thou canst not catch a pipeful.*
A. The wind.
Q. *Brother-in-law to thy mother's brother, what is he to thee?*
A. My father.
Q. *Who is the man who loves another man's child better than his own?*
A. The man who loves his wife better than his child.
Q. *Grass grass in the field, with four eyes, and eight legs, tell me what it is?*
A. A mare in foal.

Q. *What is it that goes into the water, and under the water and through the water and never touches the water ?*

A. An egg in the duck's belly.

Q. *What goes up white and comes down yellow ?*

A. An egg.

Q. *In a field I saw ten pulling four.*

A. A girl's fingers milking.

Q. *Black as coal yet not coal ; white as snow and yet not snow ; it leaps here and there like a little foal.*

A. A magpie.

Q. *There are ten white horses going under the hill, now they go ; now they go, now they sit up.*

A. Thy teeth.

Q. *Four white ladies run after each other, but never catch each other.*

A. A windmill.

Q. *A little box, one can open it, a field full of men cannot shut it.*

A. A nut.

Q. *Smaller than a mouse and higher than a castle.*

A. A plum on a tree.

Q. *What grows head down and feet up ?*

A. Onion.

Q. *Here he comes ; my eye is filled before my belly.*

A. A mustard.

Q. *Grows in a garden and never grows green.*

A. Mushroom.

Q. *What goes over the water and under the water, and over the wood and under the wood ?*

A. A young woman, crossing a wooden bridge, carrying a wooden pail of water on her head.

## CHAPTER XXII

# IMMORTAL INDIAN IMPRINTS

**Hearts Beat Together—Believers in One God and Mother—Life after Death—Impervious to Poverty—Funeral Rites—Functions of the Chief—Pride of Place for the Tribal Mother—Organisation into Castes—Slang Words of Gipsy Origin—Daily Reminders—Rishis and Shastra—Those Brilliant Eyes.**

*When I was in Bulgaria in* 1959 *a Muslim gipsy travelled* 500 *miles to see me at Sofia. He told me he was anxious to come to Bombay to study Sanskrit. He has since written to me that he has studied the Sanskrit-Russian Dictionary and found many common words in Indian and gipsy* (Romany) *languages. He is convinced his ancestors belonged to India. He writes: "Everything that shows us any trial, any link which connects us with India makes our hearts beat faster and stronger; as we try to look back into our past and find out our origins thousands of miles apart, our hearts beat as though we are together. I hope we, some day, will be so".*

—ALLY HUSEIN CHAUSH

HOW MANY of us born in India can claim to have this degree of love for India ? Who would not salute this forgotten son of India ?

The gipsy believes in the one great God. In Romany there is a word of Indian origin 'O Devel' or 'O Del' which could be translated as 'God' or 'Great Spirit' but the gipsy more often uses the diminutive 'O Delore'. The name is perpetually on his lips—'O Delore Jane' (God knows), 'Bachta te del O Del' (God bless you).

Anything approaching worship of images is entirely foreign to his nature. The Phu (earth) is his all ; he regards

it as something holy, something absolute and immovable in the midst of a changing and unstable world. For him it has always existed. In India we call it Dharati Mata (Mother Earth). Gipsies feel themselves somehow linked to the stars. The drinking of dew and rain-water strengthens the bond. They also worship the moon. When the moon is visible they take off their hats and bow their heads and mutter prayers. They believe in conversion of human beings into plants and animals—a fancy which constantly recurs in their folk lore.

The gipsy is convinced that he will continue his life after death. He believes in Karma. He does not worry too greatly about the other world.

Outwardly they yield to the missionary but they always remain gipsies and retain their ancient gipsy beliefs. They make the sign of the cross, attend mass and even receive the sacrament; but at the bottom of their hearts they remain indifferent.

All gipsies have a peculiar dislike of priests. The priest is in their view responsible for every ill to which they are liable.

They try to ensure the success of an undertaking by voluntarily imposing a fast on themselves. Mothers make vows during pregnancy in the belief that the child will benefit.

Their joviality is irrepressible. Poverty does not depress them nor does wealth make any difference to their happiness. No stroke of fate is severe enough to disturb their equanimity. Worry and regret are unknown. 'Better luck next time' is their motto. We live in the present, they say. 'O Delore Zane!' 'God knows what tomorrow will bring.'

By the roadside they utter their last heart-rending wail and die. By the roadside they are buried and forgotten. The

cart moves on. Their home is the world and continual change is the essence of their life. Movement is to them what rest and settled life are to us. They never have time for self-examination or heart-searching. Each day brings new situations and new impressions which obscure the unpleasant memories of yesterday. Laughing, singing, dancing, playing, they have wandered for centuries through the civilised world, and the civilised world seems to have forgotten them, letting them pass by.

It may be that they are stronger than civilisation. But even if they are, why do they exercise that strength, so relentlessly rejecting all attempts to change them? Why do they go on wandering, and how long will they do it?

They believe in good and evil spirits. Each group of good and evil spirits is ruled by a 'Mutuja'. If a gipsy woman habitually loses her temper, they take it that an evil spirit has found its way to her (a belief common in rural Punjab too). If a young man dies suddenly, they think a bad fairy embraced him. The spirits have power over the living. Their vengeance is feared.

At death the Transylvanian gipsies give themselves over to numerous superstitions, on the one hand to help the soul of the dead, on the other hand out of fear. Thus, a white dog is made to lick the limbs of a dying person to facilitate his death; this custom is also connected with the transmigration of souls into animals in which the gipsies believe.

Fear of the erring soul of the dead dictates many other customs. After death in a tent (or in a room) the corpse is taken out through the rear so that the soul may not find its way back. It is tabooed to use the name of the dead, for the soul might come back, but here the wish to forget may also play a part.

All the possessions of the dead are burnt, first to destroy everything that could bring his soul back, but also to help him on his way and to procure for him also after his death those things which he used in his worldly life. It is the custom to put the favourite instruments and belongings of the deceased, his violin, knife, watch, etc., and also food, beside the corpse in the coffin.

The dead are buried in an open coffin where this is possible. This usage is ascribed to the custom of driving a pole into the earth at the place of the deceased's head with the intention of removing the head later and to bury it elsewhere in order to hasten the putrefaction of the corpse, for only after this is completed can the soul leave it. On some occasions the grave is covered with thorns so that nobody may step over it.

Mr. Block tells us that before burying the dead man, his little finger is broken and a coin is attached to it by means of a little red string so that he can pay for his journey across the "river of the dead". After death, among some tribes, a wild feast is held for fear that the soul of the deceased will come back, and it is hoped that the noise of the feast will chase him away. At death ceremonies the gipsies show much grief and they lament loudly. The more important the deceased, the greater their expressions of sorrow. Absence of outward signs of grief is very rare.

The chief is leader, judge and priest in one person. He exercises supreme power against which they have no appeal. He officiates at weddings which are invalid if not contracted in his presence, though the actual consecration ceremony is performed by the mother. Her decision is accepted as final only if the chief is not available for consultation in any dispute.

The gipsies have their own law. The court sits during the gipsy rallies which take place after the big fair. The proceedings are secret, only the eldest gipsies are permitted to take part. A fine is imposed in proportion to the gravity of the offence. The greatest punishment is banishment from the tribe.

In addition to the chieftain, each autonomous groups of gipsies has a tribal mother *Phuri Dai* (*i.e. burhi,* or old, mother) who acts as the guardian of its moral code. She never appears in public, like the chief of the clan, but her influence is as powerful as his—perhaps more so. There is no human problem upon which she does not tender advice "with her parched, wrinkled face, in which the years have drawn deep furrows and the storms and stresses of life have inscribed their tale". She is a splendid representation of the gipsy type. Her age is awe-inspiring. Her cry *"Seom Phuri, Seom Phuri"* (I am old, I am old) arouses not only the respect of her fellow tribesmen but also the pity and terror of the non-gipsy world. No one dares to laugh at her shrunken figure or her ugly face. They are afraid of her. There is a feeling that a wish from her might bring bad luck. The gipsy lives for his tribe and will never speak an unkind word against his fellow tribesmen; on the contrary, he will even submit to punishment on their behalf when he is guiltless.

The gipsies are divided into occupation groups which almost resemble the castes that are so peculiar to the social system of their ancestors, the Hindus. The gipsy recognises the various branches of his family and his tribe receives hospitality as a *phral* (brother) among gipsies wherever he meets them. The gipsy law lives in the heart of every individual gipsy.

In every country they form one group or several, and each group is independent of the other.

In south-eastern Europe and Hungary, there are five distinct tribes, who differ from one another in speech as well as occupation. All live in one country but they have their own distinct occupations. This alone makes any sort of unity or pan-gipsy gathering impossible. In 1930 a misleading report was published that the gipsies of Europe had chosen a king. The coronation of Michael II was said to have taken place near Warsaw. The Warsaw police had guaranteed the genuineness of the election, but this was a mere tribal affair. No such thing as a gipsy kingdom exists. A year after the event a second gipsy king was proclaimed in Poland and the first election declared null and void. There was once a so-called gipsy king who sent a letter to King George V in support of an attempt being made by some of his subjects to found a gipsy colony in North Africa. Anyone who has from 25 tents to several hundred families under his jurisdiction styles himself a chief.

Many slang words in English owe their origin to the gipsies. According to Leland, 'slang' itself is a very old gipsy word derived from Hindi *swang* (which means artificial). An actor is called as *swang* and *slang*.

Some slang words of gipsy origin are :

*Jockey :* Derived from the gipsy word *Chuckni* which means a whip.

*Bloke :* A common word for man, is cognate with Hindustani word *Lok* (people).

*Duffer :* From gipsy word Adov (that). That man's—*a duvva*—'duffer'.

*Niggling :* From a Romany *nikliovva* and *nikavava*, cognate with Hindustani word *nikalan*, 'to go forth'.

*Jomer :* A sweetheart or female favourite derived from Hindi word *choomy* (kiss).

*Drum or Dhom:* Is the common English gipsy word for 'road'.

*Dick:* An English slang word for sight or seeing, is purely gipsy (compare Hindi *Dekh*, 'to see'). The gipsies call the telescope *dur-dikhi*, that with which you can see a long distance.

*Chivy:* A common English vulgar word, meaning to goad, drive, vex, hunt or throw away, is from gipsy *chiv, chib, or chipe* (*Jib, 'tongue', in Hindi*).

*Dook:* To tell fortune.

*Lour, lower or loafer:* Borrow has shown its original identity with the Hindustani word *loot* or *plunder*.

*Maunder:* To stroll about and beg—from the gipsy word *mang* (Hindi original). There is a famous gipsy poem which opens with: Mang Phrala (Beg O Brother).

*Parny:* A vulgar word for 'rain' is supposed to have come to England from the Hindi (and gipsy) word *pani* (water).

*Yack:* Watch, probably derived from the gipsy word.

*Tiny or Teeny:* Derived from gipsy *tano*, meaning little.

*Punch:* From the gipsy and Hindi word *panch* (five).

*Toffer:* A woman who is well-dressed in new clean clothes from the gipsy word *Dhoy*—to wash.

*Mug:* Face, from Hindi word *mukha*.

Apart from these contributions to English speech which proclaim their early affinities, many of the words used by the gipsies –as we saw in foregoing chapters—daily reaffirm their origins. When they drink to the health of a fellow gipsy they say *jivi*—which is the Sanskritic exclamation for "Live long". They call a snake *sappa*. Like Hindus they attribute magic properties to the snakes. The highly honoured wise men

among them are called *rashey*, reminiscent ot the Sanskrit Rishi. (In fact the gipsologist A. F. Pott devoted a whole page to the word *rashey* in his book on gipsies.) The Bible is referred to as *shastra*. The *trishul* mark figures among their effects. They are familiar with the terms *tatva* and *mukti*. Their chiefs are still called *thakur*. They use the words *raja* and *rani* for king and queen. The gipsy word for writing, *niggaring*, has obvious links with *nagari* (as in 'Devanagari'). Their word for India itself is *Baro Than* (the Great Land).

I cannot do better than end the book with a quotation from one of the greatest scholars on the origins and ways of gipsies, Charles Leland :

"The conclusion which I have drawn from studying Romany and different works on India is that the gipsies are descendants of a vast number of Hindus, who were expelled or emigrated from that country... Throwing aside all the evidence afforded by language, traditions, manners and customs, one irrefutable proof still remains in the physical resemblance between gipsies all the world over and natives of India. Even in Egypt the native gipsy is not Egyptian in appearance but Hindu. The peculiar brilliancy of the eye and its expression in the Indian is common to the gipsy".

## AN ALPHABETICAL LIST OF SOME GIPSY WORDS

*abchin*, steel.
*achài*, yet.
*acharàva*, to sigh.
*achàva*,to rest;*àchardó*,remained.
*achibes*, Bor., to-day.
*achinelar*, Bor., to cut.
*akanà*, now.
*akata* (s. within).
*akhór*, *akór*, nut; *akhorin*, *akorin*, nut-tree.
*akiarghióm*, sighed.
*akla*, *akhià*, this.
*allióm*, (s. come), came.
*amóksi* (s. up), carriage.
*amàl*, partner.
*ambról*, pear; *ambrolin*, pear-tree.
*amŭni* (Bor., *amiñi*), anvil.
*anàva*, to bring.
*andré*, within; *andràl*, (*andryál*), from within; cf. behind.
*angàli*, armful.
*angàr*, coal; *angaréskoro*, collier.
*anglé*, forwards; *anglutnô*, foremost; *anglàl*, from the front.
*angust*, *angrŭst*, finger.
*angustri*, *angrusti*, ring.
*anro*, Bor., egg.
*apdivés*, to-day.
*aquia*, Bor., eye.
*arajay*, Bor., priest.
*arakàv* (Bor., *aracate*), guard; *arakàva* (Bor., *arakatear*), to guard.
*arati*, Bor., blood.
*aratti*, night.
*armàn*, curse.
*aruje*, Bor., wolf.
*asàn*, wheel.
*asàva*, to laugh.
*àsfa*, tear.
*asharàva*, to praise.
*astalà*, piastre.
*astaràva*, to hold.
*astra*, Bor., moon.
*até*, here; *attàr*, hence.
*avakà*, *avkà*, *avakhà*, *avaklià*, this.
*avatià*, here.
*avàva*, to come.
*avdivés*, to-day.
*aver*, *avel*, Bor., other.
*avghin*, honey.
*avk ós*, first.
*avri*, out; *avriàl*, from out; *avrutnó*, foreigner.

*bacria*, (s. sheep), Bor., goat.
*bàgnia*, bath.
*bahtaló*, unfortunate.
*bahtzé*, (s. near), garden.
*bakó—pakó*.
*bakró*, sheep; *bakrí*, ewe; *bakrichô* (*bakritzo*) lamb.
*bal*, hair.
*balamó*, Greek; *balamanó*, adj.
*baló*, swine; *balichó* (*balitzo*), dimin.
*bandàva* to shut, to tie; *bandloipé*, band.
*bangàva—pangàva*.
*bar*, stone; *bareskoro*, stone-cutter.
*baravaló*, rich.
*baribu*, Bor., much.
*baró*, great; *baredér*, comp. *bariovàva* (s. increase).
*baró*, heavy.
*bas*, Bor., hand.
*bashàva*, to cry out.
*bashé*, near; *bashàl*, from near.
*bashipé*, habitation.
*basno*, *bashnó*, cock.
*bato*, *batu*, Bor., father.
*ben*, birth.
*benàva* to, beget.
*benàva*, to say.
*benk* (Bor., *bengue*), devil; *beng bengaló*, devilish.
*berô* (Bor., *bero*, *berdo*), ship; *beréskoro*, seaman.
*bersh*, (Bor., *berji*), year.

*beshàva* (s. habitation), to inhabit, sit, possess.
*bestipen*, Bor., habitation; *bestelar*, Bor., to inhabit.
*bezéh*, pity.
*bi*, without.
*biàv*, marriage.
*biàva* (s. when), to be delivered.
*bighiàn*, he sold.
*bikinàva*, *biknàva* (s. buy), to sell.
*bish*, Bor., *bis*, (s. numbers) twenty.
*bishàva*, *bisàva*—*beshava*.
*bistó*, (s. habitation), seated.
*biv* (Bor., *bifi*), snow.
*bokaló*, hungry; *bokaliovàva*, to become hungry.
*bolàva*, to baptize; *bolipé*, baptism.
*bópi*, bean.
*bor*, belly.
*bordón* (s. ship)—*vordón*.
*bov*, oven; *bovèskero*, baker.
*bracuńi*, Bor., sheep.
*brakeràva* (s. Jew), for *vrakeràva*.
*brishunaó* (Bor., *brijindel*), rain.
*buchardó*, (s. cover), uncovered.
*bugló*, broad; *bugliovàva*, to spread out.
*bukó*, hovel.
*bunista*, dung.
*burda*, Bor., door.
*burnék*, handful.
*burshin*, rain.
*bus*, straw.
*bus*, Bor., much.
*busni*, Bor., sweet.
*but*, *butló*, much.
*buti*, business; *butiakoro*, day-labourer.
*buznó*, *buzni* (s. buck), she-goat; *buznoró*, kid.
*buzos*, buck.

*cajuoo*, Bor., deaf.
*callicaste*, Bor., yesterday.
*calo*, *callardo*, *caloro*, Bor., black.
*cambri*, Bor., pregnant.
*cangri*, Bor., church.
*cani*, Bor., hen.
*casian*, Bor., wood.
*casto*, Bor., hammer.
*chachipé*, truth; *chachipanó*, true.
*chài* (s. boy), girl.
*chaja*, Bor., cabbage.
*chaliovàva*, to be sated.
*cham*, kiss.
*chamkeràva*, to chew.
*chaó*, boy.
*char*, grass; *charàva*, to graze.
*chars* (s. wing), possible.
*charó*, plate, *charéskoro*, plate-maker.
*chàrtava*, to vomit; *chartimpé*, vomiting.
*chattāva*, to vomit; *chattimpé*, vomiting.
*chavó*, boy-child.
*chavory* (s. boy), Bor., girl.
*chavrí*, chicken.
*cherghneí* (Bor., *cherdillas*), star.
*chibes*, Bor., day.
*chik*, *chika*, mud; *chikàva*, to muddy.
*chikhandi* (s. little), in a little while.
*chiktàva*, to sneeze.
*chimutra*, Bor., moon.
*chin*, till.
*chinàva* (Bor., *chinelar*), to cut.
*chinday*, Bor., mother.
*chiniovàva*, to be tired.
*chinkerava*, *chingheràva*, to pierce.
*chip*, tongue.
*chírdo*, Bor., dwarfish, small.
*chirikló*, bird.
*chivàva*, *chitàva*, to throw (also s. poor).
*cholàva*, to steal.
*cholàva* (s. cut), to whittle.
*chon*, moon, month.
*choràva*, to steal; *chor*, *chornó*, *churnó*, thief; *chordikanó*, stolen.
*chori*, Bor., knife.
*choró*, poor; *choripé*, poverty.
*choryài*, secretly.
*chova*, Bor., hand.

*chuché*, *chuchi*, breast.
*chuchò*, empty.
*chukél*, dog; *chukli*, bitch.
*chukní*, tobacco-pipe.
*chumi* (Bor., *chupendí*), kiss; *chumidàva*, to kiss.
*chungalŏ*, miserable.
*chungàrva*, to spit; *chungér*, spittle.
*churi* (Bor., *chulo*), knife.
*churnó* (s. steal), thief.
*chuti*, Bor., milk.
*ciria*, Bor., passover.
*cornicha*, Bor., basket.
*crallis*, Bor., king.
*cremen*, Bor., worm.
*culco*, *curpue*, Bor., Sunday.

*daha*, more.
*dài*, mother.
*dal*, door.
*dal*, Bor., fear.
*dant* (Bor., *daní*), tooth.
*dantàva*, *dantilàva*, to bite.
*dar*, door.
*dar*, fear; *daràva* (Bor., *darabar*, *daraňar*), to fear.
*daràv*, pomegranate; *daravin*, pomegranate-tree.
*das*, Bulgarian; *darikanó*, adj.
*dat*, father.
*dàva*, to give; *de*, imper.
*de*, mother.
*debél*, Bor., god.
*déla*, it rains.
*deniló*, fool; *deniliovàva*, to become a fool.
*derná*, Bor., young.
*deryàv*, sea.
*desh* (s. numbers), ten.
*devèl*, god; *devli*, goddess; *devlikanó*, godly.
*dialezàva* (s. write), to select.
*diar*, *dicar*, Bor., to see.
*dikàva*, *dikhàva* (*dihàva*, *diàva*), to see.
*dimi*, *dimish*, pantaloon; *dimialó*, wearing pantaloons.
*dinar*, Bor., to give.
*dinelo*, Bor., fool.
*dinó*, given.
*disiló*, day breaks.
*divés*, day; *diveséskoro*, day's wages.
*domuk*, fist.
*drak*, grape.
*drom* (Bor., *dron*, *drun*), road.
*dua*, *duga*, Bor., pain.
*dudum*, gourd.
*dui* (s. numbers), two.
*duk*, pain; *dukàiva*, to be in pain, to love; *dukhaipé*, love; *dukhani*, mistress.
*dulevàva* (s. near), to work.
*dumŏ*, back.
*duquipen*, Bor., pain.
*dur*, afar; *duràl*, from afar.

*eftà* (s. numbers), seven; *eftavardéri*, seventy.
*eketané*, together.
*enre*, Bor., within.
*erajay*, Bor., priest.
*eresia*, Bor., vineyard.
*estuché*, Bor., sword.

*far*, time, times.
*fàrkia*, scythe.
*felé*, down.
*fendo*, Bor., good.
*fŏros*, market-place.
*furí*, colt.
*furŏ*, old.

*gàlpea*, gold.
*gao*, Bor., village.
*garàva*, to conceal; *garatikanŏ*, mysterious.
*garipé* (s. itch), Bor., scab.
*gav*, village; *gavudnó*, villager.
*gel*, Bor., ass.
*ghamee*, Bor., ship.
*ghantàva*, to comb.
*ghélava*, to play (in music).
*ghéles*, always.
*ghéliom*, *gherphióm* (s. go), went.
*ghenàva*, to count.
*gher*, itch; *gheraló*, itchy.
*gheràva*, to make.
*ghermŏ*, worm.

*ghili* (*ghilǒ*), song; *ghiliàva*, *ghiliovàva*, to sing; *ghilimpé*, instrument of music.
*ghivés*, day.
*ginar*, Bor., to count.
*giv*, (Bor., *gi*), grain, wheat.
*give*, Bor., snow.
*gŏrvi*, Bor., ox.
*gŏrko*, bad.
*goshàva*, to cleanse.
*goshnǒ*, dung (*gosnǒ*).
*gotí*, brain; *gotiavér*, intelligent.
*grafàva*, to write.
*grast*, (Bor., *gras*, *gra*), horse; *grastni* (Bor., *grani*), mare; *grastanŏ* (*grài*), adj; *grastéskoro*, horseman.
*gris*, Bor., cold.
*gudlǒ*, sweet.
*guel*, Bor., ass; itch.
*guilabar*, Bor., to sing.
*guruv*, *guri*, ox; *guruvní*, *gurumni*, cow.
*gustǒ*, (s. hen), Bor., goose.
*guva*, pit.
*guy*, Bor., grain, wheat.

*handiovàva—khandiovàva*.
*hanlǒ*, sword.
*hapai*, apple.
*has*, cough; *hasàva*, to cough.
*hindovi* (s. from). India.
*hirdǒ—khurdǒ*.
*hohaimpé—khohaimpé*.

*ich* (s. come),—yich.
*iniya* (s. numbers), nine; *iniyavardéri*, ninety.
*ishtàr*, (s. numbers), four.
*iv*, snow.
*iv*, grain, wheat.

*jamutró*, son-in-law.
*janàva* (s. negation), to know.
*jangàva*, to awake.
*jàvà*, to go; *jadlõ*, part.
*jel*, (s. itch), small-pox.
*jeni*, Bor., ass.
*jenǒ : kayék jeno*, no one.
*jeroro*, Bor., ass; *jerini*, fem.
*jil*, *jir*, Bor., cold.
*jil*, Bor., grain, wheat.
*jinar*, Bor., to count.
*jivàva*, to live.
*jojana*, Bor., lie.
*joro*, Bor., head.
*jov*, barley.
*jov*, (s. file), six.
*jucal*, Bor., beautiful.
*juco*, Bor., dry.
*jumeri*, Bor., bread.
*junar*, Bor., to hear.
*jut*, Jew; *jutanó*, Jewish.
*juter*, *juti*, Bor., vinegar.
*jutia*, (s. sew), Bor., needle.
*juv*, louse.

*ka*, who, which.
*kàde*, (s. early), every.
*kaini*, *kagni*, *kàinà*, hen.
*kalipè*, excommunication.
*kalo*, black.
*kam* (Bor., *cam*, *can*), sun.
*kamàva* (Bor., *camelar*), to wish.
*kamlioipé*, *kamnioipé*, perspiration; *kamlǒ*, perspiring; *kamniovàva*, *kamliovàva*, to perspire.
*kamni*, pregnant.
*kàndela*, it stinks; *kandìniko*, stinking.
*kangli*, comb.
*kann*, ear.
*kànna*, when.
*kar*, pudendum virile.
*karghìri*, church.
*kàrin*, where.
*kasht*, *kash*, *kast*, *kas*, wood.
*kasukŏv*, deaf.
*katàr*, from.
*katàr*, whence.
*katàva*, to spin.
*kat na*, Gypsy tent.
*kayék jenŏ*, no one.
*ke*, who, which.
*kebór*, how many.
*kelàva*, to play (in music).
*kelipè*, (s. because), dance.
*ker*, house.
*kerà* , cheese.
*keralŏ* (s. wash)—*gheraló*.

*keràva*, to make.
*kerkó*, bitter.
*kermő*, worm.
*keti*, how much.
*kfur*, heel.
*khan*, crepitus ventris.
*khandi*, little.
*khanìnk*, *khaìnk*, well.
*khanjovàva*, *khandiovàva*, to scratch; *khanjàva*, neut.
*khanlő*, sword.
*khar*, pit.
*khasói* (s. eat), food.
*khatàva*, to dig.
*khàva*, to eat.
*kheli*, fig.; *khelin*, fig-tree.
*khiàva*, *khliàva*, cacare; *khendó*, *khlendő*, part.
*khohaimpè*,lie; *khohavnő*, *khohanó*, liar; *khohavniovàva*, to be deceived.
*khokhavniovàva*, to be cheated.
*kholiteràva*, *kholiazàva* (s. write), to be angry; *kholiniakoro*, angry.
*khor*, deep.
*khorakhài*, Turk; *khorakhanó*, Turkish.
*khristuné*, Christmas.
*khur*, heel.
*khurdó*, dwarfish, small.
*kilàv*, plum; *kilavin*, plum-tree.
*kilavdõ* (s. rich), fat.
*kilő*, stake.
*kinàva*, to buy.
*kirvó*, sponsor; *kirvi*, god-mother.
*kisi*, sack.
*kiustik*, girdle.
*koch*, knee.
*kőkkalo*, bone.
*kolin*, bosom.
*kon*, who.
*kopàna*, trough.
*kori*, (s. shut), neck.
*kőrin*, root.
*koró*, blind.
*koró*, bracelet.
*koshàva*, to cleanse.
*kàshnika*, basket.
*kotor* (s. cheese), little.
*ksillàbi*, *ksillàvi*, tongs.
*kukudi*, hail.
*kuri*, colt.
*kurkő*, Sunday.
*kurlő*, throat.
*kushàva* to revile (also *kus*).

*labelar*, Bor., to sing.
*lachanö*, (s. ashamed), shameful.
*lachés*, well.
*lachipé*, alms.
*lachó*, good.
*lahtdàva*, to kick.
*lajàva*, to be ashamed.
*langar*, Bor., coal.
*lav*, word.
*lava*, to take, get.
*len*, river.
*li*, Bor., paper.
*likhnari* (s. sleep), lamp.
*lillar*, Bor., to take, get.
*lim*, mucus.
*lindr*, sleep; *lindralő*, sleepy.
*linilő*, taken.
*lir*, *lil*, paper.
*lokó*, light.
*loló*, red.
*lon*, salt; *londaràva*, to salt.
*loria*, Bor., sea.
*loshaniovàva* to rejoice; *loshanő*, rejoicing; *loshanoipé*, joy.
*lové*, money.
*lubni*, (*lobni*), harlot.
*luey*, Bor., wolf.
*luludi*, (s. similar), flower.
*lumi*, *lumiaka*, Bor., harlot.

*ma*, negation.
*macha*, Bor., fly.
*machi*, fish; *machéskoro*, fisherman.
*majàra*, Bor., half.
*makàva*, to paint.
*makià*, fly.
*malkőch*, a Gipsy tribe.
*mamui*, opposite; *mamuyal*, from the opposite side.
*mang*, Bor., meat.
*manró*, *mandó*, bead; *manréskoro*, baker.
*manuklő*, *manikló*, stump (of vine).

*mànŭsh* (Bor., *manu*, *manus*), man; *manushni*, woman; *manushanó*, human.
*màra*, sea.
*maràva*, to beat.
*marnó*, *marly*, bread.
*maru*, Bor., man; *marupe*, mankind.
*mas*, meat; *maséskoro*, butcher.
*masék*, month.
*mashà*, tongue.
*maskare*, between; *maskaràl*, from between.
*mastér*, blacksmith.
*mattő*, drunk; *mattiovàva*, to become drunk.
*mel*, dirt; *melaló*, dirty; *melaliovàva*, to become dirty.
*meligàina*, Bor., pomegranate-tree.
*merăva*, to die.
*merdò* (s. die), Bor., sick, see also invalid.
*meripé*, death.
*mermóri*, tomb.
*milia*, Bor., *milan* (s. numbers) thousand.
*minch*, pudendum muliebre.
*mishàkos*, mouse.
*mne óri*, tomb.
*mol*, wine.
*mollati*, Bor., grape.
*molo*, death.
*mórti* (Bor., *morchas*), leather; *mortiàkoro*, worker in leather.
*móskàre*, (s. beget), calf.
*moste* (s. shut), from *mui*.
*moskovis*, Russian.
*muclar*, Bor., to void urine.
*mui*, mouth; *muyàl*, *muiyàl*, in front.
*mukàva*, to abandon.
*mulanó*, ripe; *mulanokeràva*, to ripen.
*mulanő*, (s. dirty), dark.
*mulótar*, (s. die), after dying.
*muntàva* (*mundàva*), to shave; *muntaràva*.
*murdaràva*, to murder.
*murs*, brave, male, boy.
*murtaràva* (s. die), to murder.
*mushó*, mouse.
*mutér*, urine; *mutràva*, (Bor., *mutrar*), to void urine.

*na*, negation.
*nài*, nail.
*naisvàli*, (*naisbali*), invalid.
*naisukàr* (s. negation), not handsome.
*najabar*, *najar*, Bor., to depart; to lose; *najipen*, loss.
*nak*, nose.
*nakàva*, to pass.
*namporemè*, invalid, *mamoporèma*, sickness.
*nanài*, negation.
*nangó*, naked.
*nao*, Bor., name.
*napalàl* (s. behind), afterwards.
*naqui*, Bor., nose.
*nashàva*, to depart.
*nashavàna*, to lose.
*nasti*, negation.
*nastó*, departed.
*nasukàr*, ugly.
*nav*, name.
*ne*, negation.
*nevó* (Bòr., *nebo*, *nebel*), new.
*niglavàva* (*niklavàva*), to go out.
*nilài*, summer.
*ninelo*, Bor., fool.
*nublì*, harlot.

*oghì*, heart; *oghèske*, alms.
*ohto* (s. numbers), eight; *ohtovardéri*, eighty.
*okanà*, now.
*okhià*, this.
*oklistô*, mounted.
*onghi*, heart.
*opré*, up; *opràl*, *opryàl*, from above.
*orioz*, Bor., wolf.
*orobàr*, Bor., to weep.
*ostebel*, Bor., god.
*ostelis*, *osteli*, Bor., down.
*oté* (s. negation) for *até*.
*otià*, (s. why), there.

*pachandra*, Bor., passover.
*pachàva*, to ask.
*pai*, water.
*paillo*, Bor., Greek.
*pak*, Wing.
*pakiàva*, to believe.
*pakó*, bald.
*palabear*, Bor., to shave.
*palàl*, behind; *palalutnó*, second.
*palvàl*, wind.
*panch* (s. numbers), five.
*pangàva*, to break.
*pangheràva*, lame; *panghiovàva*, to become lame.
*pani*, water; *panidàva*, to water.
*pankó*, *pangó*, lame.
*papai*, apple.
*papina* (s. hen), goose.
*paquilli*, Bor., silver.
*parés*, slowly.
*parnavó*, friend; *parnavoipé*, friendship.
*parnó*, white.
*parő—baró*.
*paroji*, Bor., leaf.
*parvàràva*, to nourish.
*parvardó*, fat.
*pas*, *pasque*, Bor., half.
*pashé*, near.
*pàta*, clothing.
*patranki*, passover.
*patrin*, leaf, feather.
*pavi*, Bor., nose.
*pechàva*, to ask.
*pekàva*, to cook; *pekiló*, *pekó*, cooked.
*peliőm*, fell; *pelótar*, after falling.
*pelő*, testicle.
*pen* (s. brother), sister.
*penàva* (Bor., *penar*), to say; also for *benàva* (s. infant).
*peninda* (s. numbers) fifty.
*peràva*, to fall.
*peràva*, to fill.
*perdàl*, over (the water).
*perdó*, full; *pertiovàva*, to become full.
*peryŭl*, *peryulikanó*, foreign.
*pfuv*, *phuv*, earth.
*phuró*, *phurũ*, old; *phuriovóva*, to grow old.
*piàv*, marriage.
*piàva*, to drink.
*pichavàva*, (s. business), to send; *picharàva* (s. paper).
*pichiscas*, Bor., cough.
*pikaló*, prop.
*pikó*, shoulder.
*pilò*, *peló*, fallen; *pilő*, drunk.
*pincharàva*, to be acquainted with.
*pindó*, *pinró*, foot.
*piràva* (Bor., *pirar*), to walk.
*pirindős*, on foot.
*piripé*, gait.
*pirnangő*, barefooted.
*piró*, *pirnő*, foot.
*pishàva*, to grind.
*pishót*, bellows.
*pivlì*, widow.
*piyar*, Bor., to drink; *pita*, drink.
*plal* (Bor., *plan*, *plano*), brother.
*plata*, Bor., clothing.
*plubi*, Bor., silver.
*po* (s. behind), more.
*pol*, navel.
*polaléste*, (s. behind), farther back.
*pomi*, Bor., silver.
*porì*, tail.
*porias*, Bor., bowel.
*porik*, *porikìn*, raisin.
*pos*, *po*, Bor., belly.
*poshik*, soil.
*posőm*, wool.
*pov*, eye-brow.
*poyichàver*, (s. yesterday).
*pràhos*, ashes.
*pral*, brother; *pra*.
*prasàva*, to ridicule.
*predàl*, over (the water).
*puchàva*, to ask.
*pudinó*, musket.
*puranó*, old (ancient).
*puró*, old; *puripé*, old age.
*purì*, bridge.
*purum*, onion.

*pusca*, Bor., musket.
*pushum*, flea.
*putar*, Bor., well.
*puti*, business.
*puv*, earth.

*quer*, Bor., house.
*querar*, *querelar*, Bor., to make.
*querosto* (s. house), Bor., August.

*rachi*, Bor., night.
*rài*, nobleman.
*rakiló* (s. night) it is growing dark.
*raklo*, *rakli*, child.
*ran*, cane.
*ràni*, nobleman's wife.
*rano*, early.
*rashài*, priest; *rashani*, priest's wife.
*rat*, *rattì*, night.
*ratt* (Bor., *rati*), blood.
*res*, *rez*, vineyard.
*resàva*, to finish, suffice.
*résheto*, sieve.
*resis*, Bor., cabbage.
*richini*, bear.
*rói*, spoon.
*roi*, Bor., flour.
*rom*, *romni*, *romano*, Gipsy.
*romni*, (Bor., *romi*), wife.
*rovàva*, to weep.
*rŏyi*, spoon.
*rublì*, rod.
*ruk*, tree.
*rukono*, whelp.
*rup*, silver; *rupovanó*, of silver.
*rutuni*, nose.
*ruv*, wolf.

*sahriz*, tent.
*sali*, wife's brother; *saló*, wife's sister.
*sannŏ*, slim.
*sannó—sunnó*.
*sapp*, serpent.
*sar*, similar, like.
*sar*, Bor., garlic.
*saràndа* (s. numbers), forty.
*saro*, Bor., all.
*sarró*, *sàrrore*, *sarnŏ*, all.
*sarvó*, *sârvolo*, all.
*sas*, Bor., iron.
*sashŭi*, mother-in-law.
*saste*, Bor., tall.
*sastó* (s. from) healthy, right.
*sastrŏ*, father-in-law.
*saullo*, Bor., colt.
*sàvvore*, *savvo*, all.
*semer*, pack-saddle.
serka, Br., tent.
savlia, Br., basket.
*shah*, cabbage.
*shastìr*, *shastrì*, iron; *shastirés-kor*, blacksmith.
*shastó*, healthy, right.
*shatrŏ*, father-in-law.
*shasŭi*, mother- in-law.
*shel*, (s. numbers), hundred.
*shelŏ*, rope.
*sherŏ*, head.
*shevél*, (s. cold), hundred.
*shikàva*, to learn; *shikló*, learned; *shikliovàva*, to learn.
*shil* (s. numbers) , hundred.
*shil*, *shilalŏ*, *shilaliovàva*, to feel cold.
*shingh*, horn.
*shoró*, head.
*shoshói*, hare.
*shov* (s. numbers), six.
*shovardéri*, (s. numbers), sixty.
*shuchó*, *shusó*, clean.
*shukó*, dry, emaciated; *shukiovàva*, to become dry; *shukiaràva*, *shukiavàva*, to dry.
*shunàva*, to hear.
*shut*, *shutkó*, vinegar; *shutlió*, *shudlŏ*, sour.
*sigó*, quick.
*singe*, Bor., horn.
*singo*, Bor., quick.
*sir*, garlic.
*sivàva*, to sew.
*sivrì*, hammer.
*so*, what.
*sobelar*, *sornar*, Bor., to sleep.
*somnakài* (Bor., *sonacai*), gold.
*sóske*, why.

*sostàr*, because.
*sottó* (s. sleep) asleep.
*sovàva*, to sleep.
*stavros*, cross.
*sudró*, cool.
*sukàr*, beautiful.
*sàmpacel*, Bor., near.
*sunàva* (s. near),—*shunàva*,
*sungalo*, Bor. horned.
*sunnó*, dream.
*sut*, milk.
*suttó*—*sottó*,
*suv* (s. sew), needle.

*ta*, *te*, and.
*tabioipé*, heat.
*tahkár*, *taakàr*, king; *takarn*, queen.
*tài*—*dài*.
*takhiàra*, tomorrow.
*tam-manúsh*, blind man.
*tan*, place.
*taparàva*, to heat.
*tapàva*, *tap-dàva*, to strike.
*tapiàva*, to boil, to burn; *topàva*, to feel warm.
*tapillar*, Bor., to drink.
*tapiova*, to burn.
*taràva*, to thirst.
*tarshul*, cross.
*tato*, Bor., bread.
*tattipé*, heat.
*tattó*, warm; *tattiovàva*, to become hot.
*tattò* (Bor., *tatí*), bath.
*tav*, thread.
*taviàva*, to boil.
*te*, and.
*telé*, down.
*teràva* (Bor., terelar), to have.
*ter ghiovàva*, *tertiováva*, to stand.
*tern*, young; *ternoro*, Bor., new.
*tikno*, infant, young.
*tovàva*, *toàva*, to wash.
*tovèr*, *tovel*, axe; *toveréskoro*, axemaker.
*tràndaa* (s. numbers), thirty.
*traquias*, Bor., grape.
*trebene*, Bor., star.
*trésca*, fever.
*tri*, *trin* (s. numbers), three.
*triàk*, shoe.
*trijul*. Bor., cross.
*trush*, *trust*, thirst; *trushaló*, thirsty; *trushaliovàva*, to become thirsty.
*trushúl*, cross.
*turra*, Bor., nail.
*turshúl*, cross.
*tut*, milk.

*ucharàva*, to cover.
*uchó*, tall; *uchedèr*, one taller.
*ukiaváva*, *uktiavàva*, to step.
*ukliàva*, *uklavàva*, to mount.
*umdebél*, Bor., god.
*ungá*, Bor., affirmation.
*ungla*, Bor., nail.
*uryáva*, *uryaváva*, to dress.
*uryoipé*, dress.

*và*, affirmation.
*vanró*, *vantõ*, egg.
*vapiizàva*, to baptize.
*var*, time, times.
*vària*, weight.
*varó*, flour.
*vasiàv*, mill.
*vast* (*vas*), hand.
*vent*, winter.
*verni*, file.
*vesh*, *ves* (s. healthy), forest.
*vicha*, shoot.
*vikó*, shoulder.
*viv*—*biv*.
*vlàkhia*, Wallachian.
*vordón*, carriage.
*vrakeràva*, to speak.
*vrehtũla*, extinguisher.
*vuchó*, tall.
*vudàr*, *vutàr*, door.
*vus*, flax.
*vust*, lip.

*yak*, fire.
*yak*, eye.
*yavèr*, other.
*yek* (s. numbers), one.

*yekpàsh*, half.
*yernò*, young.
*yich*, yesterday; *yichavèr*, day before yesterday.
*vismatà*, linen.
*zàmpa*, frog.
*zen*, saddle.
*zòralò*, strong.

*(This first appeared as an addendum to an article by A. G. Paspati, the gipsologist)*

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A well-known figure in the movement for Indian freedom, the author, Shri Chaman Lal, is now a Buddhist *Bhikshu*. He has visited many parts of the world with the intention of discovering proofs of the influence of ancient India on the other civilisations of the world.

His *Hindu America*, a brilliant exposition of the influence of Indian civilisation on the Aztec, Inca and Maya cultures of the Americas, appeared in 1940 and is running in its sixth edition.

In later books, like the *Secrets of Japan*, *India and Japan*, *Switzerland* and *Gipsies : Forgotten Children of India*, the author has carried his research into the ramification of Indian civilisation to many lands. Other books by him include *Mysteries of Life and Death*, *Here is God*, *Love*, *Life and Liberty*, *India Mother of Us All*, *Textbooks of Indian Culture*, and *Spiritual Stories from India*.

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